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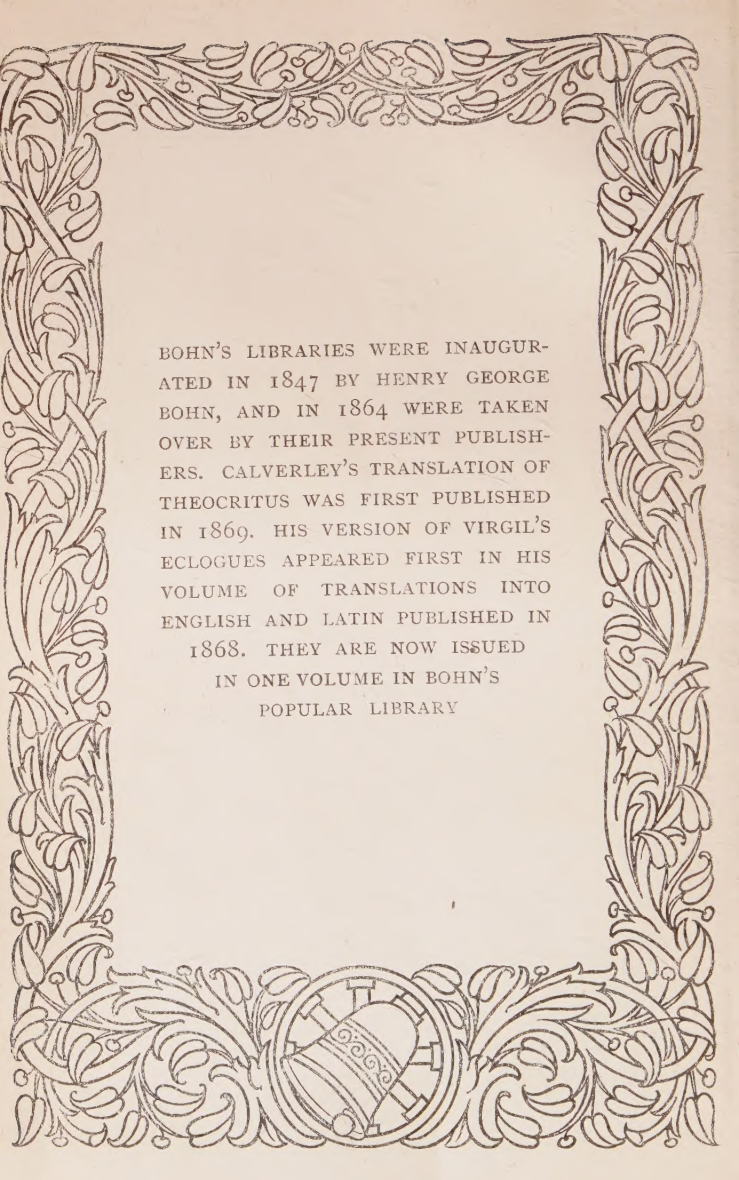

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THE IDYLLS OF THEOCRITUS

AND THE

ECLOGUES OF VIRGIL

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY

C. S. CALVERLEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

R. Y. TYRRELL, LITT.D., D.C.L.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION. BY R. Y. TYRRELL, LITT.D., D.C.L. . vii

THEOCRITUS

PREFACE xxxi

IDYLL 1. THE DEATH OF DAPHNIS 1

II. THE SORCERESS 8

III. THE SERENADE 15

IV. THE HERDSMEN 18

V. THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS . . . 25

VI. THE DRAWN BATTLE 39

VII. HARVEST-HOME 42

VIII. THE TRIUMPH OF DAPHNIS . . . 50

IX. PASTORALS 58

X. THE TWO WORKMEN 61

XI. THE GIANT'S WOOING 65

XII. THE COMRADES 69

XIII. HYLAS 72

XIV. THE LOVE OF ÆSCHINES 77

XV. THE FESTIVAL OF ADONIS . . . 82

XVI. THE VALUE OF SONG 92

XVII. THE PRAISE OF PTOLEMY . . . 98

XVIII. THE BRIDAL OF HELEN 104

XIX. LOVE STEALING HONEY 110

XX. TOWN AND COUNTRY 111

XXI. THE FISHERMEN 114

XXII. THE SONS OF LEDA 119

PAGE

IDYLL XXIII. Love Avenged 131
XXIV. The Infant Heracles . . . 135
XXV. Heracles the Lion Slayer . . 142
XXVI. The Bacchanals 154
XXVII. A Countryman's Wooing . . . 157
XXVIII. The Distaff 165
XXIX. Loves 167
XXX. The Death of Adonis . . . 169
XXXI. Loves 172

Fragment from the "Berenice" 175
Epigrams and Epitaphs 175

VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES

ECLOGUE I 187
II 191
III 195
IV 201
V 204
VI 209
VII 213
VIII 217
IX 223
X 226

INTRODUCTION.

IT was a happy thought to publish in a form separate from the whole works of Calverley, his translation of the Idylls of Theocritus and the Eclogues of Virgil. Perhaps no poems which have come down to us from the ancient world—certainly none of the comparatively small compass which the Idylls and the Eclogues embrace—have more completely won their way into the minds and hearts of British readers. Only ten Greek books were printed before Aldus began his fruitful labours, and only two of them were poets. Those two were Homer and Theocritus. In many respects they may be called the Alpha and Omega of Greek poetry. Though the Syracusan singer cannot claim a niche in the Temple of Fame as majestic as that of the incomparable Chian, yet it

is probable that very many more readers have been *startled* by the genius of Theocritus, because, while we make the acquaintance of Homer at a pre-critical stage of our development, Theocritus does not burst upon us until the critic is born in us, if destined ever to come to the birth. The bloom is rubbed off Homer during our school days. I shall never forget the astonishment with which I first read the Idylls, nor the conviction with which a fellow student—also introduced for the first time to Theocritus—maintained his marked superiority to the father of Epic poetry. For one must, with Sainte-Beuve, couple together the two poets as the supreme types of majesty and beauty in Greek poetry. Virgil's Eclogues, unlike the Idylls, meet us in early boyhood, and for the adult are clothed in the "celestial light" which plays round the morning of life.

Perhaps the most inspired of the Idylls, and that which has most potently fired the imagination of poets and lovers of poetry in all ages, is the second, *The Sorceress*, which tells the tale of Simaetha's love, her desertion, and the magic arts by which she tries to charm back to her the faithless Delphis. As a character-

istic specimen of the consummate art of the poet, and of the taste and skill of the translator, I would point to the passage where Simaetha describes to her handmaid Thestylis the first visit of the young athlete, whom she had summoned to cure her love-sickness:

Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
He bent his pitiless eyes on me; looked down,
And sate him on my couch, and sitting, said:
"Thou hast gained on me, Simætha, (e'en as I
Gained once on young Philinus in the race),
Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"For I had come, by Eros I had come,
This night, with comrades twain or may-be more,
The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,
And, wound about my brow with ribands red
The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Had ye said 'Enter,' well: for 'mid my peers
High is my name for goodliness and speed:
I had kissed that sweet mouth once and gone my way.
But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,
With brand and axe would we have stormed ye then.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love,
Next to thee, maiden, who didst pluck me out,
A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,
And badst me hither. It is Love that lights
A fire more fierce than his of Lipara,
(Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.)

> "Scares, mischief-mad, the maiden from her bower,
> The bride from her warm couch." He spake: and I,
> A willing listener, sat, my hand in his,
> Among the cushions, and his cheek touched mine,
> Each hotter than its wont, and we discoursed
> In soft low language.

If this be put beside the Greek, it will be seen how little of the finish of the original is lost; and a like comparison with the admirable prose version of Mr. Andrew Lang will show how faithful is the translation. And one craves a verse-rendering of a poem like this. Mr. Lang's prose is perfectly graceful and full of poetry, but the metrical garb greatly enhances the charm. A little beyond the passage just quoted a couple of lines illustrate this. Mr. Lang gives:

> When the horses of the Sun were climbing the sky, bearing Dawn of the rosy arms from the ocean stream.

Calverley's version is as literal and more poetical:

> When up the sky
> Galloped the mares that chariot rose-limbed Dawn.

The Greek is:

> ἀνίκα πέρ τε ποτ' οὐρανὸν ἔτρεχον ἵπποι
> Ἀῶ τὰν ῥοδόπαχυν ἀπ' Ὠκεανοῖο φέροισαι.

Calverley has wonderfully maintained the mystic

charm of the Greek, to a great extent lost in Virgil's eighth eclogue, which, however, contains the prettiest passage in the eclogues, the finest lines in Virgil in the opinion of Macaulay, describing a boy's love at first sight.

> Within our orchard-walls I saw thee first,
> A wee child with her mother—(I was sent
> To guide you)—gathering apples wet with dew.
> Ten years and one I scarce had numbered then;
> Could scarce on tip-toe reach the brittle boughs.
> I saw, I fell, I was myself no more.
> Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.
>
> Now know I what love is. On hard rocks born
> Tmaros, or Rhodope, or they who dwell
> In utmost Africa do father him;
> No child of mortal blood or lineage.
> Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

Damon's song deplores the fickleness of a woman. Naturally the song of Alphesiboeus is more suggestive of Theocritus, since its theme is the same, the unfaithfulness of a lover. This is more like the *Pharmaceutria:*

> Be his such longing as the heifer feels,
> When, faint with seeking her lost mate through copse
> And deepest grove, beside some water-brook

In the green grass she sinks in her despair,
Nor cares to yield possession to the night.
Be his such longing: mine no wish to heal.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

More steeped in the spirit of Theocritus is a modern poem, the *Sister Helen* of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The Little Brother plays a more important part than Thestylis, and enhances the tragic gloom of the picture. Helen is even more implacable than Simaetha, as the following extracts from the poem will show:

"For three days now he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,
And he prays in torment to be dead."
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little Brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he says till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass but never can."
"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little Brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he calls for ever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame."

"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little Brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."
"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little Brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Oh never more, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and cries full fain,
Sister Helen
That you pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little Brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
No more, no more between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen.
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate born of Love is blind as he,
Little Brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Love turned to Hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

I have dwelt at length on the *Pharmaceutria* because it stirred Virgil to an imitation of it, and because it is one of the finest poems ever written—a *vignette* of

the most exquisite finish. Readers should note especially, not only the passages which I have quoted, but also the grand lines (35-40) in which we are told that the incantation is performed at the dead of night, when the voices of the sea and the winds are hushed, and only the baying of hounds in the town is heard, at the approach of the dread goddess, Hecate, standing at the cross-roads; and Thestylis is bidden to sound the gong which will drive evil spirits away. Also, especial attention should be directed to the description of the two athletes coming from the palaestra. The poem is a masterpiece from the first line, with its abrupt appeal to Thestylis for the laurel leaves and other appurtenances of the black art, to the last in which she invokes the stars as "pursuivants of the car of stilly Night."

The most thoroughly pastoral of all the poems is the seventh, the *Thalysia* or *Harvest-Home,* which, to use the poet's own words, "reeks of lush Summer and fruit-laden Fall." But while the singer revels in the pears and apples and damsons that roll at his feet, he cannot forbear a sneer at the wretched rivalries which agitated the literary coteries of Alexandria:

I hate your builders who would rear a house
High as Oromedon's mountain-pinnacle:
I hate your song-birds too, whose cuckoo-cry
Struggles (in vain) to match the Chian bard.

It is an interesting passage, and from it we may fairly infer that the poet saw the essential difference between himself and his merely imitative Alexandrine rivals, which is so beautifully expressed by Mr. Andrew Lang:

Their critical activity in every field of literature was immense, their original genius sterile. In them the intellect of the Hellenes still faintly glowed, like embers on an altar that shed no light on the way. Yet over these embers the God poured once again the sacred oil, and from the dull mass leaped, like a many-coloured flame, the genius of Theocritus.

Idylls XIV and XV are probably taken from mimes of Sophron. The former tells excellently how Cynisca, the mistress of Aeschines, betrays at a drinking party her passion for Lycus, Wolf. She sat silent, and

"Hast seen
A wolf?" some wag said. "Shrewdly guessed," quoth she,
And blushed—her blushes might have fired a torch.

Then a horse-jobber or rough-rider (*Knight* is hardly the word), who was present, cruelly sings a song "O Lycus mine," "O Wolf, my Wolf," when the poor

little teased girl bursts into tears, and, shocking! Aeschines slaps her face: she gathers up her robe and flies from the room. I greatly regret that I cannot, with Paley and Calverley, believe that it was the Thessalian horse-jobber whom Aeschines struck. The whole course of the narrative seems to me to show that it was Cynisca who received the slap in the face; and so think the Scholiast, Mr. Lang, and many critics English and foreign. Mr. Snow (Professor Kynaston) is doubtful. The story is told with great art, but it is an unpleasant tale. It suggests—what the recently discovered mimes of Herodas strongly confirm—that in the disappearance of the mimes of Sophron we have sustained no great loss. The fifteenth idyll, *The Adoniazusae*, has been much and justly admired in modern times, and was a great favourite of Matthew Arnold's. Curiously enough the ancient scholiasts thought little of the piece, citing as instances of bad taste (ψυχρόν) some of the touches which seem to us most natural and happy. I myself have always regarded it as a triumphantly successful bit of character-painting. What could be more amusing than the way in which the two Syracusan ladies Gorgo

and Praxinoä at once on meeting fall to running down their respective husbands, when suddenly it occurs to Gorgo that the child knows what they are talking about, and she sets matters right with,

> *Gorgo.* Nay call not, dear, your lord, your Deinon, names
> To the babe's face. Look how it stares at you!
> There, baby dear, she never meant Papa!
> It understands, by'r Lady! Dear Papa!

But I own I was grieved to find what seems to me clear evidence that such scenes, in which women inveigh against their absent spouses, were part of the stock in trade of the mimographer, and were constantly reproduced. So also the reviling of servants by their mistresses, which appears in this idyll. I am sure that Theocritus has handled these scenes with an art altogether transcending that of his rivals, but I had thought that they were the fruit of his own genius and invention. It is a pity that Herodas should have disabused us of a pleasing illusion, seeing that he has given us so little in exchange for it.

The Fishermen (XXI) is one of the few sunless and laughterless idylls. Here the singer no longer revels in woods, streams, and flowers; but we find

the same master-hand painting the cabin by the gray sea, where the wise old fishermen philosophize on life, its hardships and its consolations.

The Countryman's Wooing (XXVII) is a gem, and has given to the vocabulary of French poetry a new word in its title, *oaristys*. Lines 31, 32 give a good specimen of the happiness of the translation:

The Maiden. And bearing children all our grace destroys.
Daphnis. Bear them and shine more lustrous in your boys.

The semi-epical pieces are far less interesting, but they have furnished Tennyson with some beautiful passages. In the *Dioscuri* (XXII), in the description of the fight between Amycus and Polydeuces, we meet a very original figure:

> Broad were his shoulders, vast his orbèd chest:
> Like a wrought statue rose his iron frame:
> And nigh the shoulder on each brawny arm
> Stood out the muscles, hugh as rolling stones
> Caught by some rain-swoln river and shapen smooth
> By its wild eddyings.

The keenness of observation here displayed did not escape the not less observant eye of the great English poet, as is shown by this passage from *The Marriage of Geraint:*

At last it chanced that on a summer morn
(They sleeping each by other) the new sun
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams,
Who moving cast the coverlet aside,
And bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.

Readers will remember Virgil's *somno mollior herba*, suggested by μαλακώτερα ὕπνω (applied by Theocritus to the coverings of the couch of Venus), as well as the picture in Tennyson's *Palace of Art:*

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

The details of the life of Theocritus have not come down to us. He flourished between 283 and 263 B.C., and lived chiefly in Cos and Syracuse, which was a city of great magnificence under the rule of the princely Hiero, in whom Theocritus seems to have found a far from generous patron. Syracuse often gave valuable aid to the arms of Rome, while her

inspired son was producing models destined to kindle the imagination of Rome's first, and only great, bucolic poet. Among the friends of Theocritus were Nicias a physician of Miletus and the physician's wife Theogenis or Theugenis, to whom he addresses the charming little poem (XXVIII) in choriambic measure entitled *The Distaff*. Other friends were Aratus, and his preceptors Philetas and Asclepiades. His visit to the Court of Alexandria seems to have been a failure, nor did he find favour at the Court of Hiero. He does not seem to have possessed the arts of the courtier. His two least effective poems are strained and stilted eulogies of Hiero and Ptolemy (XVI, XVII). Probably the taste of the time leaned more to the mythologic lore displayed in the Alexandrine revival of the Ionian epic than to the native wood-notes wild of the Dorian singer. Alexandria was the proper sphere for a Callimachus, not for a Theocritus. He had no interest in the problems of life and the painful "riddle of the earth"; and he was prone to look at the bright side of things. We may say of him, in his own words:

γέλως δέ οἱ εἴχετο χείλευς.

But sometimes, as in the fourth Idyll, one of the brightest in the collection, we meet the *lacrimae rerum:*

Battus. Sweet Amaryllis! thou alone, though dead, art unforgot.
Dearer than thou, whose light is quenched, my very goats are not.
Oh for the all-unkindly fate that's fallen to my lot!
Corydon. Cheer up, brave lad! to-morrow may ease thee of thy pain:
Aye for the living are there hopes, past hoping are the slain:
And now Zeus sends us sunshine, and now he sends us rain.

He is touched by the pathos of the death of Amaryllis, and the saddest line in Theocritus is:

ἐλπίδες ἐν ζωοῖσιν, ἀνέλπιστοι δὲ θανόντες.

His political outlook is bounded by Hellas. He does not even mention the city on the Tiber, which during his own lifetime was fast strengthening her hold on the island of his birth.

There is little to add to what I have already said about the Eclogues of Virgil. This is not the place to discuss the questions to which they give rise: for instance, whether the poet was dispossessed of his farm, and then reinstated; or who was the mysterious infant foreshadowed in the *Pollio* eclogue. Irrespective of such questions, immortality is reserved for such lines as:

Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit?
Barbarus has segetes?

and

Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem.

This delicate charm of style, as Horace calls it, is what puts the translator on his mettle. And Calverley has bounded to the touch of the spur. Not even Sir C. Bowen has more deftly caught the spirit of the eclogues. For the sake of comparison with Calverley's pretty version (Ecl. viii, 40 ff.) given above, I quote one of Sir C. Bowen's happiest efforts:

'Twas in our crofts I saw thee, a girl thy mother beside,
Plucking the apples dewy, myself thy pilot and guide;
Years had I number'd eleven, the twelfth was beginning to run:
Scarce was I able to reach from the ground to the branches that
snapp'd,
Ah, when I saw how I perished! to fatal folly was rapt!

Now have I learn'd what Love is. Among rocks savage and wild
Tmaros or Rhodope bare him or far Garamantis for child—
Mortal his lineage is not, nor human blood in his veins.
Begin, my flute of the mountains, with me my Maenalus strains.

It is amusing to find in Virgil, the average schoolboy's implacable and truceless foe, what that schoolboy would probably call "a howler." Damon

(Ecl. viii, 52-60) commenting on the unequal union between Mopsus and the faithless Nysa, prays that a similar unnatural change (like Nysa's perverse preference of Mopsus to himself) may take place throughout all nature, the wolf fleeing from the lamb, the tamarisk distilling amber, and so forth. He concludes with the words *omnia vel medium fiant mare*, "let earth become mid ocean." The acuteness of Elmsley saw that this was a mistranslation of Theocritus i, 134 *πάντα δ' ἔναλλα γένοιτο*, a very similar passage, clearly present to Virgil's mind. But *ἔναλλα* means "topsy-turvy," which Virgil mistook for *ἐνάλια*, "marine." It is interesting to notice that he must have pronounced λλ as *ll* is now pronounced in the Romance languages, something like *ly*. Thus the two words would be to him indistinguishable in sound. It is possible that in the same eclogue (line 64) *effer aquam* is a similar mistranslation of *αἶρε τὸ νᾶμα*, Theocritus xv, 27, where *νᾶμα* means not "water" but "yarn."

Admirable as are the translations of Calverley, I would venture to predict that his enduring fame will rest rather on his original compositions in *Verses and Translations* and in *Fly Leaves*. It is sad that Calverley

never heard the late Sir Henry Irving recite, as the great actor did with a perfect feeling of the humour and irony of the piece, the *Gemini and Virgo*. Had he been allotted the common span of life, he might have enjoyed that pleasure. It was no small evidence of the native refinement of Irving that he was attracted by so chastened a piece, quite in the vein of Praed at his best. One does not often meet in such playful poems a stanza like the following, with its irresistible parenthesis:

> I did not love as others do
> (None ever did that I've heard tell of);
> My passion was a byword through
> The town she was, of course, the belle of.

It is not long since an able writer in the *Quarterly* made a well-written and well-reasoned plea for Sir W. Gilbert, as deserving a very high place among our minor poets. The qualities on which he dwelt most strongly were the great felicity of diction and the perfect mastery of metre and rhyme. These are the very faculties which are most prominent in Calverley. But to both Gilbert and Calverley their humour and delicate irony were fatal. The British reader will not admit to the Valhalla of the poets one who is hardly

ever quite serious. Even Hood, many of whose poems are profoundly serious, was never permitted to pass that portal through which Gray passed with such a very thin volume under his arm.

There is a vein of pathos in Calverley. The tutor in *Fly Leaves*, communing with the locket, and surrounding it with romantic associations altogether the birth of his own imagination, is a pathetic figure. C. P. Mulvany had a deeply pathetic vein. He, the Dublin analogue of Calverley, had much of Calverley's humour, but not a tenth part of his scholarship. His most prominent Oxford rivals, A. D. Godley, and A. T. Quiller-Couch, have a delightful vein of humour, but eschew the serious. Cambridge has been more prolific than Oxford of poets of the school of Calverley. He was known as Blayds at Harrow and Oxford; but it was at Cambridge that he first showed those faculties which have gained for him his present place in the world of letters. Owen Seaman, another Cambridge man, a winner of the Porson Prize, still keeps the flashlight of humour and irony ablaze in the pages of *Punch*.

The present volume does not show Calverley in his

most characteristic phase; but the reader will find the deftness and lightness of touch which have gained such widespread popularity for his *Verses and Translations* and his *Fly Leaves*. And many who perhaps know by heart several of the pieces in those two little books, will meet for the first time the masterly translations which form the present volume. The reader who consults the essay on metrical translations at the end of the collected *Works of Charles Stuart Calverley* will see what arduous restrictions he imposes on translators, and will observe with what fidelity he conforms to the standard which he has erected.

Many graceful pens have paid their tribute to the charming singer of Sicily. The collected works of Calverley and the translation of Lang have preserved poems in his praise which are both beautiful and discriminating. We would fain add here a Villanelle by Oscar Wilde, a fine scholar and an ardent lover of Theocritus, taken from *Echoes from 'Kottabos'*:[1]

O singer of Persephone!
In the dim meadows desolate
Dost thou remember Sicily?

[1] Printed by permission of Mr. Robert Ross.

Still through the ivy flits the bee
Where Amaryllis lies in state;
O singer of Persephone!

Simaetha calls on Hecate
And hears the wild dogs at the gate;
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still by the light and laughing sea
Poor Polypheme bemoans his state;
O singer of Persephone!

And still in boyish rivalry
Young Daphnis challenges his mate;
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,
For thee the jocund shepherds wait;
O singer of Persephone!
Dost thou remember Sicily?

R. Y. Tyrrell.

Dublin,
April, 1908.

THEOCRITUS.

PREFACE.

I HAD intended translating all or nearly all these Idylls into blank verse, as the natural equivalent of Greek or of Latin hexameters; only deviating into rhyme where occasion seemed to demand it. But I found that other metres had their special advantages: the fourteen-syllable line in particular has that, among others, of containing about the same number of syllables as an ordinary line of Theocritus. And there is also no doubt something gained by variety.

Several recent writers on the subject have laid down that every translation of Greek poetry, especially bucolic poetry, must be in rhyme of some sort. But they have seldom stated, and it is hard to see, why. There is no rhyme in the original, and *primâ facie* should be none in the translation. Professor Blackie has, it is

true, pointed out the "assonances, alliterations, and rhymes," which are found in more or less abundance in Ionic Greek.* These may of course be purely accidental, like the hexameters in Livy or the blank-verse lines in Mr. Dickens's prose: but accidental or not (it may be said) they are there, and ought to be recognised. May we not then recognise them by introducing similar assonances, etc., here and there into the English version? or by availing ourselves of what Professor Blackie again calls attention to, the "compensating powers"† of English? I think with him that it was hard to speak of our language as one which "transforms *boos megaloio boeién* into 'great ox's hide.'" Such phrases as 'The Lord is a man of war,' 'The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,' are to my ear quite as grand as Homer: and it would be equally fair to ask what we are to make of a language which transforms Milton's line into ἡ σάλπιγξ οὐ προσέφη τόν ὡπλισμένον ὄχλον.‡ But be this as it may, these phenomena are surely too

* Blackie's *Homer*, Vol. I., pp. 413, 414.

† *Ibid.*, page 377, etc.

‡ Professor Kingsley.

rare and too arbitrary to be adequately represented by any regularly recurring rhyme: and the question remains, what is there in the unrhymed original to which rhyme answers?

To me its effect is to divide the verse into couplets, triplets, or (if the word may include them all) *stanzas* of some kind. Without rhyme we have no apparent means of conveying the effect of stanzas. There are of course devices such as repeating a line or part of a line at stated intervals, as is done in 'Tears, idle tears' and elsewhere: but clearly none of these would be available to a translator. Where therefore he has to express stanzas, it is easy to see that rhyme may be admissible and even necessary. Pope's couplet may (or may not) stand for elegiacs, and the *In Memoriam* stanza for some one of Horace's metres. Where the heroes of Virgil's Eclogues sing alternately four lines each, Gray's quatrain seems to suggest itself: and where a similar case occurs in these Idylls (as for instance in the ninth) I thought it might be met by taking whatever received English stanza was nearest the required length. Pope's couplet again may possibly best convey the pomposity of some Idylls and the

point of others. And there may be divers considerations of this kind. But, speaking generally, where the translator has not to intimate stanzas—where he has on the contrary to intimate that there are none —rhyme seems at first sight an intrusion and a *suggestio falsi*.

No doubt (as has been observed) what 'Pastorals' we have are mostly written in what is called the heroic measure. But the reason is, I suppose, not far to seek. Dryden and Pope wrote 'heroics,' not from any sense of their fitness for bucolic poetry, but from a sense of their universal fitness: and their followers copied them. But probably no scholar would affirm that any poem, original or translated, by Pope or Dryden or any of their school, really resembles in any degree the bucolic poetry of the Greeks. Mr. Morris, whose poems appear to me to resemble it more almost than anything I have ever seen, of course writes what is technically Pope's metre, and equally of course is not of Pope's school. Whether or no Pope and Dryden *intended* to resemble the old bucolic poets in style is, to say the least, immaterial. If they did not, there is no reason whatever why any of us

who do should adopt their metre: if they did and failed, there is every reason why we should select a different one.

Professor Conington has adduced one cogent argument against blank verse: that is, that hardly any of us can write it.* But if this is so—if the 'blank verse' which we write is virtually prose in disguise—the addition of rhyme would only make it rhymed prose, and we should be as far as ever from "verse really deserving the name."† Unless (which I can hardly imagine) the mere incident of 'terminal consonance' can constitute that verse which would not be verse independently, this argument is equally good against attempting verse of any kind: we should still be writing disguised, and had better write undisguised, prose. Prose translations are of course tenable, and are (I am told) advocated by another very eminent critic. These considerations against them occur to one: that, among the characteristics of his original which the translator is bound to preserve, one is that he wrote metrically; and that the prattle which passes

* Preface to Conington's *Æneid*, page ix.

† *Ibid.*

muster, and sounds perhaps rather pretty than otherwise, in metre, would in plain prose be insufferable. Very likely some exceptional sort of prose may be meant, which would dispose of all such difficulties: but this would be harder for an ordinary writer to evolve out of his own brain, than to construct any species of verse for which he has at least a model and a precedent.

These remarks are made to shew that my metres were not selected, as it might appear, at hap-hazard. Metre is not so unimportant as to justify that. For the rest, I have used Briggs's edition * (*Poetæ Bucolici Græci*), and have never, that I am aware of, taken refuge in any various reading where I could make any sense at all of the text as given by him. Sometimes I have been content to put down what I felt was a wrong rendering rather than omit; but only in cases where the original was plainly corrupt, and all suggested emendations seemed to me hopelessly wide of the mark. What, for instance, may be the true

* Since writing the above lines I have had the advantage of seeing Mr. Paley's *Theocritus*, which was not out when I made my version.

meaning of βολβός τις κοχλίας in the fourteenth Idyll I have no idea. It is not very important. And no doubt the sense of the last two lines of the "*Death of Adonis*" is very unlikely to be what I have made it. But no suggestion that I met with seemed to me satisfactory or even plausible: and in this and a few similar cases I have put down what suited the context. Occasionally also, as in the Idyll here printed last—the one lately discovered by Bergk, which I elucidated by the light of Fritzsche's conjectures—I have availed myself of an opinion which Professor Conington somewhere expresses, to the effect that, where two interpretations are tenable, it is lawful to accept for the purposes of translation the one you might reject as a commentator. τετορταῖος has I dare say nothing whatever to do with 'quartan fever.'

On one point, rather a minor one, I have ventured to dissent from Professor Blackie and others: namely, in retaining the Greek, instead of adopting the Roman, nomenclature. Professor Blackie says * that there are some men by whom "it is esteemed a grave offence to call Jupiter Jupiter," which begs the question: and

* Blackie's *Homer*, Preface, pp. xii., xiii.

that Jove "is much more musical" than Zeus, which begs another. Granting (what might be questioned) that *Zeus, Aphrodite,* and *Eros* are as absolutely the same individuals with *Jupiter, Venus,* and *Cupid* as *Odysseus* undoubtedly is with *Ulysses*—still I cannot see why, in making a version of (say) Theocritus, one should not use by way of preference those names by which he invariably called them, and which are characteristic of him: why, in turning a Greek author into English, we should begin by turning all the proper names into Latin. Professor Blackie's authoritative statement* that "there are whole idylls in Theocritus which would sound ridiculous in any other language than that of Tam o' Shanter" I accept of course unhesitatingly, and should like to see it acted upon by himself or any competent person. But a translator is bound to interpret all as best he may: and an attempt to write Tam o' Shanter's language by one who was not Tam o' Shanter's countryman would, I fear, result in something more ridiculous still.

* Blackie's *Homer*, Vol. I., page 384.

C. S. C.

IDYLL I.

The Death of Daphnis.

THYRSIS. A GOATHERD.

THYRSIS.

SWEET are the whispers of yon pine that makes
Low music o'er the spring, and, Goatherd, sweet
Thy piping; second thou to Pan alone.
Is his the hornèd ram? then thine the goat.
Is his the goat? to thee shall fall the kid;
And toothsome is the flesh of unmilked kids.

GOATHERD.

Shepherd, thy lay is as the noise of streams
Falling and falling aye from yon tall crag.
If for their meed the Muses claim the ewe,
Be thine the stall-fed lamb; or if they choose
The lamb, take thou the scarce less-valued ewe.

THYRSIS.

Pray, by the Nymphs, pray, Goatherd, seat thee here

Against this hill-slope in the tamarisk shade,
And pipe me somewhat, while I guard thy goats.

GOATHERD.

I durst not, Shepherd, O I durst not pipe
At noontide; fearing Pan, who at that hour
Rests from the toils of hunting. Harsh is he;
Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel.
But, Thyrsis, thou canst sing of Daphnis' woes;
High is thy name for woodland minstrelsy:
Then rest we in the shadow of the elm
Fronting Priapus and the Fountain-nymphs.
There, where the oaks are and the Shepherd's seat,
Sing as thou sang'st erewhile, when matched with him
Of Libya, Chromis; and I'll give thee, first,
To milk, ay thrice, a goat—she suckles twins,
Yet ne'ertheless can fill two milkpails full;—
Next, a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,
Two-handled, newly-carven, smacking yet
O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs
About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays
Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts
Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears
A damsel ('tis a miracle of art)
In robe and snood: and suitors at her side
With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,

Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.
She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now
Her chance regards on that: they, all for love
Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labour lost.
Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands
On the rough rocks: thereto the old man with pains
Drags his great casting-net, as one that toils
Full stoutly: every fibre of his frame
Seems fishing; so about the gray-beard's neck
(In might a youngster yet) the sinews swell.
Hard by that wave-beat sire a vineyard bends
Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes;
A boy sits on the rude fence watching them.
Near him two foxes: down the rows of grapes
One ranging steals the ripest; one assails
With wiles the poor lad's scrip, to leave him soon
Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile
With ears of corn a right fine cricket-trap,
And fits it on a rush: for vines, for scrip,
Little he cares, enamoured of his toy.

The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,
Triumph of Æolian art, a wondrous sight.
It was a ferryman's of Calydon:
A goat it cost me, and a great white cheese.
Ne'er yet my lips came near it, virgin still
It stands. And welcome to such boon art thou,

If for my sake thou'lt sing that lay of lays.
I jest not: up, lad, sing: no songs thou'lt own
In the dim land where all things are forgot.

THYRSIS [*sings*].

Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
The voice of Thyrsis. Ætna's Thyrsis I.
Where were ye, Nymphs, oh where, while Daphnis pined?
In fair Penëus' or in Pindus' glens?
For great Anapus' stream was not your haunt,
Nor Ætna's cliff, nor Acis' sacred rill.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
O'er him the wolves, the jackals howled o'er him;
The lion in the oak-copse mourned his death.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song
The kine and oxen stood around his feet,
The heifers and the calves wailed all for him.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
First from the mountain Hermes came, and said,
"Daphnis, who frets thee? Lad, whom lov'st thou so?"
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Came herdsmen, shepherds came, and goatherds came;
All asked what ailed the lad. Priapus came
And said, "Why pine, poor Daphnis? while the maid
Foots it round every pool and every grove,

(*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song*)
" O lack-love and perverse, in quest of thee;
Herdsman in name, but goatherd rightlier called.
With eyes that yearn the goatherd marks his kids
Run riot, for he fain would frisk as they:
(*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song*):
" With eyes that yearn dost thou too mark the laugh
Of maidens, for thou may'st not share their glee."
Still naught the herdsman said: he drained alone
His bitter portion, till the fatal end.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Came Aphroditè, smiles on her sweet face,
False smiles, for heavy was her heart, and spake:
" So, Daphnis, thou must try a fall with Love!
But stalwart Love hath won the fall of thee."
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
Then " Ruthless Aphroditè," Daphnis said,
" Accursed Aphroditè, foe to man!
Say'st thou mine hour is come, my sun hath set?
Dead as alive, shall Daphnis work Love woe."
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
" Fly to Mount Ida, where the swain (men say)
And Aphroditè—to Anchises fly:
There are oak-forests; here but galingale,
And bees that make a music round the hives.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.

" Adonis owed his bloom to tending flocks
And smiting hares, and bringing wild beasts down.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
" Face once more Diomed: tell him ' I have slain
The herdsman Daphnis; now I challenge thee.'
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
" Farewell, wolf, jackal, mountain-prisoned bear!
Ye'll see no more by grove or glade or glen
Your herdsman Daphnis! Arethuse, farewell,
And the bright streams that pour down Thymbris' side.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
" I am that Daphnis, who lead here my kine,
Bring here to drink my oxen and my calves.
Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.
" Pan, Pan, oh whether great Lyceum's crags
Thou haunt'st to-day, or mightier Mænalus,
Come to the Sicel isle! Abandon now
Rhium and Helicè, and the mountain-cairn
(That e'en gods cherish) of Lycaon's son!
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.
" Come, king of song, o'er this my pipe, compact
With wax and honey-breathing, arch thy lip:
For surely I am torn from life by Love.
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.
" From thicket now and thorn let violets spring,
Now let white lilies drape the juniper,

And pines grow figs, and nature all go wrong:
For Daphnis dies. Let deer pursue the hounds,
And mountain-owls outsing the nightingale.
Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song."

So spake he, and he never spake again.
Fain Aphroditè would have raised his head;
But all his thread was spun. So down the stream
Went Daphnis: closed the waters o'er a head
Dear to the Nine, of nymphs not unbeloved.
Now give me goat and cup; that I may milk
The one, and pour the other to the Muse.
Fare ye well, Muses, o'er and o'er farewell!
I'll sing strains lovelier yet in days to be.

GOATHERD.

Thyrsis, let honey and the honeycomb
Fill thy sweet mouth, and figs of Ægilus:
For ne'er cicala trilled so sweet a song.
Here is the cup: mark, friend, how sweet it smells:
The Hours, thou'lt say, have washed it in their well.
Hither, Cissætha! Thou, go milk her! Kids,
Be steady, or your pranks will rouse the ram.

IDYLL II.

The Sorceress.

WHERE are the bay-leaves, Thestylis, and the charms?
Fetch all; with fiery wool the caldron crown;
Let glamour win me back my false lord's heart!
Twelve days the wretch hath not come nigh to me,
Nor made enquiry if I die or live,
Nor clamoured (oh unkindness!) at my door.
Sure his swift fancy wanders otherwhere,
The slave of Aphroditè and of Love.
I'll off to Timagetus' wrestling-school
At dawn, that I may see him and denounce
His doings; but I'll charm him now with charms.
So shine out fair, O moon! To thee I sing
My soft low song: to thee and Hecatè
The dweller in the shades, at whose approach
E'en the dogs quake, as on she moves through blood
And darkness and the barrows of the slain.
All hail, dread Hecatè: companion me

Unto the end, and work me witcheries
Potent as Circè or Medea wrought,
Or Perimedè of the golden hair!
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
First we ignite the grain. Nay, pile it on:
Where are thy wits flown, timorous Thestylis?
Shall I be flouted, I, by such as thou?
Pile, and still say, 'This pile is of his bones.'
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Delphis racks me: I burn him in these bays.
As, flame-enkindled, they lift up their voice,
Blaze once, and not a trace is left behind:
So waste his flesh to powder in yon fire!
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
E'en as I melt, not uninspired, the wax,
May Mindian Delphis melt this hour with love:
And, swiftly as this brazen wheel whirls round,
May Aphroditè whirl him to my door.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Next burn the husks. Hell's adamantine floor
And aught that else stands firm can Artemis move.
Thestylis, the hounds bay up and down the town:
The goddess stands i' the crossroads: sound the gongs.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Hushed are the voices of the winds and seas;
But O not hushed the voice of my despair.

He burns my being up, who left me here
No wife, no maiden, in my misery.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
Thrice I pour out; speak thrice, sweet mistress, thus:
"What face soe'er hangs o'er him be forgot
Clean as, in Dia, Theseus (legends say)
Forgat his Ariadne's locks of love."
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
The coltsfoot grows in Arcady, the weed
That drives the mountain-colts and swift mares wild.
Like them may Delphis rave: so, maniac-wise,
Race from his burnished brethren home to me.
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
He lost this tassel from his robe; which I
Shred thus, and cast it on the raging flames.
Ah baleful Love! why, like the marsh-born leech,
Cling to my flesh, and drain my dark veins dry?
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.
From a crushed eft to-morrow he shall drink
Death! But now, Thestylis, take these herbs and smear
That threshold o'er, whereto at heart I cling
Still, still—albeit he thinks scorn of me—
And spit, and say, 'ʼTis Delphis' bones I smear.'
Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.

[*Exit Thestylis.*

Now, all alone, I'll weep a love whence sprung
When born? Who wrought my sorrow? Anaxo came,
Her basket in her hand, to Artemis' grove.
Bound for the festival, troops of forest beasts
Stood round, and in the midst a lioness.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
Theucharidas' slave, my Thracian nurse now dead
Then my near neighbour, prayed me and implored
To see the pageant: I, the poor doomed thing,
Went with her, trailing a fine silken train,
And gathering round me Clearista's robe.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
Now, the mid-highway reached by Lycon's farm,
Delphis and Eudamippus passed me by.
With beards as lustrous as the woodbine's gold
And breasts more sheeny than thyself, O Moon,
Fresh from the wrestler's glorious toil they came.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
I saw, I raved, smit (weakling) to my heart.
My beauty withered, and I cared no more
For all that pomp; and how I gained my home
I know not: some strange fever wasted me.
Ten nights and days I lay upon my bed.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
And wan became my flesh, as 't had been dyed,
And all my hair streamed off, and there was left

But bones and skin. Whose threshold crossed I not,
Or missed what grandam's hut who dealt in charms?
For no light thing was this, and time sped on.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
At last I spake the truth to that my maid:
"Seek, an thou canst, some cure for my sore pain.
Alas, I am all the Mindian's! But begone,
And watch by Timagetus' wrestling-school:
There doth he haunt, there soothly take his rest.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
"Find him alone: nod softly: say, 'she waits';
And bring him." So I spake: she went her way,
And brought the lustrous-limbed one to my roof.
And I, the instant I beheld him step
Lightfooted o'er the threshold of my door,
(*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love,*)
Became all cold like snow, and from my brow
Brake the damp dewdrops: utterance I had none,
Not e'en such utterance as a babe may make
That babbles to its mother in its dreams;
But all my fair frame stiffened into wax.
Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.
He bent his pitiless eyes on me; looked down,
And sate him on my couch, and sitting, said:
"Thou hast gained on me, Simætha, (e'en as I
Gained once on young Philinus in the race,)

Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.

Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

" For I had come, by Eros I had come,
This night, with comrades twain or may-be more,
The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,
And, wound about my brow with ribands red,
The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.

Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

" Had ye said ' Enter,' well: for, 'mid my peers
High is my name for goodliness and speed:
I had kissed that sweet mouth once and gone my way.
But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,
With brand and axe would we have stormed ye then.

Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.

" Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love,
Next to thee, maiden, who didst pluck me out,
A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,
And badst me hither. It is Love that lights
A fire more fierce than his of Lipara.

(*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*)

" Scares, mischief-mad, the maiden from her bower,
The bride from her warm couch.' He spake: and I,
A willing listener, sat, my hand in his,
Among the cushions, and his cheek touched mine,
Each hotter than its wont, and we discoursed
In soft low language. Need I prate to thee,

Sweet Moon, of all we said and all we did?
Till yesterday he found no fault with me,
Nor I with him. But lo, to-day there came
Philista's mother—hers who flutes to me—
With her Melampo's; just when up the sky
Gallop the mares that chariot rose-limbed Dawn:
And divers tales she brought me, with the rest
How Delphis loved, she knew not rightly whom:
But this she knew; that of the rich wine aye
He poured 'to Love;' and at the last had fled,
To line, she deemed, the fair one's halls with flowers.
Such was my visitor's tale, and it was true:
For thrice, nay four times, daily he would stroll
Hither, leave here full oft his Dorian flask:
Now—'tis a fortnight since I saw his face.
Doth he then treasure something sweet elsewhere?
Am I forgot? I'll charm him now with charms.
But let him try me more, and by the Fates
He'll soon be knocking at the gates of hell.
Spells of such power are in this chest of mine,
Learned, lady, from mine host in Palestine.

Lady, farewell: turn ocean-ward thy steeds:
As I have purposed, so shall I fulfil.
Farewell, thou bright-faced Moon! Ye stars, farewell,
That wait upon the car of noiseless Night.

IDYLL III.

The Serenade.

I PIPE to Amaryllis; while my goats,
Tityrus their guardian, browse along the fell.
O Tityrus, as I love thee, feed my goats:
And lead them to the spring, and Tityrus, 'ware
The lifted crest of yon gray Libyan ram.
Ah winsome Amaryllis! Why no more
Greet'st thou thy darling, from the caverned rock
Peeping all coyly? Think'st thou scorn of him?
Hath a near view revealed him satyr-shaped
Of chin and nostril? I shall hang me soon.
See here ten apples: from thy favourite tree
I plucked them: I shall bring ten more anon.
Ah witness my heart-anguish! Oh were I
A booming bee, to waft me to thy lair,
Threading the fern and ivy in whose depths
Thou nestlest! I have learned what Love is now:
Fell god, he drank the lioness's milk,
In the wild woods his mother cradled him,

Whose fire slow-burns me, smiting to the bone.
O thou whose glance is beauty and whose heart
All marble: O dark-eyebrowed maiden mine!
Cling to thy goatherd, let him kiss thy lips,
For there is sweetness in an empty kiss.
Thou wilt not? Piecemeal I will rend the crown,
The ivy-crown which, dear, I guard for thee,
Inwov'n with scented parsley and with flowers:
Oh I am desperate—what betides me, what?—
Still art thou deaf? I'll doff my coat of skins
And leap into yon waves, where on the watch
For mackerel Olpis sits: tho' I 'scape death,
That I have all but died will pleasure thee.
That learned I when (I murmuring 'loves she me?')
The *Love-in-absence,* crushed, returned no sound,
But shrank and shrivelled on my smooth young wrist.
I learned it of the sieve-divining crone
Who gleaned behind the reapers yesterday:
'Thou'rt wrapt up all,' Agraia said, 'in her;
She makes of none account her worshipper.'
Lo! a white goat, and twins, I keep for thee:
Mermnon's lass covets them: dark she is of skin:
But yet hers be they; thou but foolest me.
She cometh, by the quivering of mine eye.
I'll lean against the pine-tree here and sing.
She may look round: she is not adamant.

[*Sings*] Hippomenes, when he a maid would wed,
Took apples in his hand and on he sped.
Famed Atalanta's heart was won by this;
She marked, and maddening sank in Love's abyss.

From Othrys did the seer Melampus stray
To Pylos with his herd: and lo there lay
In a swain's arms a maid of beauty rare;
Alphesibœa, wise of heart, she bare.

Did not Adonis rouse to such excess
Of frenzy her whose name is Loveliness,
(He a mere lad whose wethers grazed the hill)
That, dead, he 's pillowed on her bosom still?

Endymion sleeps the sleep that changeth not:
And, maiden mine, I envy him his lot!
Envy Iasion's: his it was to gain
Bliss that I dare not breathe in ears profane.

My head aches. What reck'st thou? I sing no more:
E'en where I fell I'll lie, until the wolves
Rend me—may that be honey in thy mouth!

IDYLL IV.

The Herdsmen.

BATTUS. CORYDON.

BATTUS.

WHO owns these cattle, Corydon? Philondas? Prythee say.

CORYDON.

No, Ægon: and he gave them me to tend while he's away.

BATTUS.

Dost milk them in the gloaming, when none is nigh to see?

CORYDON.

The old man brings the calves to suck, and keeps an eye on me.

BATTUS.

And to what region then hath flown the cattle's rightful lord?

CORYDON.

Hast thou not heard? With Milo he vanished Eliswards.

BATTUS.

How! was the wrestler's oil e'er yet so much as seen by him?

CORYDON.

Men say he rivals Heracles in lustiness of limb.

BATTUS.

I'm Polydeuces' match (or so my mother says) and more.

CORYDON.

—So off he started; with a spade, and of these ewes a score.

BATTUS.

This Milo will be teaching wolves how they should raven next.

CORYDON.

—And by these bellowings his kine proclaim how sore they're vexed.

BATTUS.

Poor kine! they've found their master a sorry knave indeed.

CORYDON.

They're poor enough, I grant you: they have not heart to feed.

BATTUS.

Look at that heifer! sure there's naught, save bare bones, left of her.

Pray, does she browse on dewdrops, as doth the grasshopper?

CORYDON.

Not she, by heaven! She pastures now by Æsarus' glades,

And handfuls fair I pluck her there of young and green grass-blades;

Now bounds about Latymnus, that gathering-place of shades.

BATTUS.

That bull again, the red one, my word but he is lean!

I wish the Sybarite burghers aye may offer to the queen

Of heaven as pitiful a beast: those burghers are so mean!

CORYDON.

Yet to the Salt Lake's edges I drive him, I can swear;
Up Physcus, up Neæthus' side—he lacks not victual there,
With dittany and endive and foxglove for his fare.

BATTUS.

Well, well! I pity Ægon. His cattle, go they must
To rack and ruin, all because vain-glory was his lust.
The pipe that erst he fashioned is doubtless scored with rust?

CORYDON.

Nay, by the Nymphs! That pipe he left to me, the self-same day
He made for Pisa: I am too a minstrel in my way:
Well the flute-part in '*Pyrrhus*' and in '*Glauca*' can I play.
I sing too '*Here's to Croton*' and '*Zacynthus O 'tis fair,*'
And '*Eastward to Lacinium*':—the bruiser Milo there
His single self ate eighty loaves; there also did he pull
Down from its mountain-dwelling, by one hoof grasped, a bull,
And gave it Amaryllis: the maidens screamed with fright;
As for the owner of the bull he only laughed outright.

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BATTUS.

Sweet Amaryllis! thou alone, though dead, art unforgot.
Dearer than thou, whose light is quenched, my very goats are not.
Oh for the all-unkindly fate that 's fallen to my lot!

CORYDON.

Cheer up, brave lad! to-morrow may ease thee of thy pain:
Aye for the living are there hopes, past hoping are the slain:
And now Zeus sends us sunshine, and now he sends us rain.

BATTUS.

I'm better. Beat those young ones off! E'en now their teeth attack
That olive's shoots, the graceless brutes! Back, with your white face, back!

CORYDON.

Back to thy hill, Cymætha! Great Pan, how deaf thou art!
I shall be with thee presently, and in the end thou'lt smart.

I warn thee, keep thy distance. Look, up she creeps again!
Oh were my hare-crook in my hand, I'd give it to her then!

BATTUS.

For heaven's sake, Corydon, look here! Just now a bramble-spike
Ran, there, into my instep—and oh how deep they strike,
Those lancewood-shafts! A murrain light on that calf, I say!
I got it gaping after her. Canst thou discern it, pray?

CORYDON.

Ay, ay; and here I have it, safe in my finger-nails.

BATTUS.

Eh! at how slight a matter how tall a warrior quails!

CORYDON.

Ne'er range the hill-crest, Battus, all sandal-less and bare:
Because the thistle and the thorn lift aye their plumed heads there.

BATTUS.

—Say, Corydon, does that old man we wot of (tell me please!)
Still haunt the dark-browed little girl whom once he used to tease?

CORYDON.

Ay my poor boy, that doth he: I saw them yesterday
Down by the byre; and, trust me, loving enough were they.

BATTUS.

Well done, my veteran light-o'-love! In deeming thee mere man,
I wronged thy sire: some Satyr he, or an uncouth-limbed Pan.

IDYLL V.

The Battle of the Bards.

COMATAS. LACON. MORSON.

COMATAS.

GOATS, from a shepherd who stands here, from Lacon, keep away:
Sibyrtas owns him; and he stole my goatskin yesterday.

LACON.

Hi! lambs! avoid yon fountain. Have ye not eyes to see
Comatas, him who filched a pipe but two days back from me?

COMATAS.

Sibyrtas' bondsman own a pipe? whence got'st thou that, and how?
Tootling through straws with Corydon mayhap 's beneath thee now?

LACON.

'Twas Lycon's gift, your highness. But pray, Comatas, say,
What is that skin wherewith thou saidst that Lacon walked away?
Why, thy lord's self had ne'er a skin whereon his limbs to lay.

COMATAS.

The skin that Crocylus gave me, a dark one streaked with white,
The day he slew his she-goat. Why, thou wert ill with spite,
Then, my false friend; and thou would'st end by beggaring me quite.

LACON.

Did Lacon, did Calæthis' son purloin a goatskin? No,
By Pan that haunts the sea-beach! Lad, if I served thee so,
Crazed may I drop from yon hill-top to Crathis' stream below!

COMATAS.

Nor pipe of thine, good fellow—the Ladies of the Lake
So be still kind and good to me—did e'er Comatas take.

LACON.

Be Daphnis' woes my portion, should that my credence win!
Still, if thou list to stake a kid—that surely were no sin—
Come on, I'll sing it out with thee—until thou givest in.

COMATAS.

'*The hog he braved Athene.*' As for the kid, 'tis there:
You stake a lamb against him—that fat one—if you dare.

LACON.

Fox! were that fair for either? At shearing who'd prefer
Horsehair to wool? or when the goat stood handy, suffer her
To nurse her firstling, and himself go milk a blatant cur?

COMATAS.

The same who deemed his hornet's-buzz the true cicala's note,
And braved—like you—his better. And so forsooth you vote
My kid a trifle? Then come on, fellow! I stake the goat.

LACON.

Why be so hot? Art thou on fire? First prythee take thy seat
'Neath this wild woodland olive: thy tones will sound more sweet.
Here falls a cold rill drop by drop, and green grass-blades uprear
Their heads, and fallen leaves are thick, and locusts prattle here.

COMATAS.

Hot I am not; but hurt I am, and sorely, when I think
That thou canst look me in the face and never bleach nor blink—
Me, thine own boyhood's tutor! Go, train the she-wolf's brood:
Train dogs—that they may rend thee! This, this is gratitude!

LACON.

When learned I from thy practice or thy preaching aught that's right,
Thou puppet, thou misshapen lump of ugliness and spite?

COMATAS.

When? When I beat thee, wailing sore: yon goats looked on with glee,

And bleated; and were dealt with e'en as I had dealt with thee.

LACON.

Well, hunchback, shallow be thy grave as was thy judgment then!
But hither, hither! Thou'lt not dip in herdsman's lore again.

COMATAS.

Nay, here are oaks and galingale: the hum of housing bees
Makes the place pleasant, and the birds are piping in the trees.
And here are two cold streamlets; here deeper shadows fall
Than yon place owns, and look what cones drop from the pinetree tall.

LACON.

Come hither, and tread on lambswool that is soft as any dream:
Still more unsavoury than thyself to me thy goatskins seem.
Here will I plant a bowl of milk, our ladies' grace to win;
And one, as huge, beside it, sweet olive-oil therein.

COMATAS.

Come hither, and trample dainty fern and poppy-
blossom: sleep
On goatskins that are softer than thy fleeces piled
three deep.
Here will I plant eight milkpails, great Pan's regard
to gain,
Round them eight cups: full honeycombs shall every
cup contain.

LACON.

Well! there essay thy woodcraft: thence fight me,
never budge
From thine own oak; e'en have thy way. But who
shall be our judge?
Oh, if Lycopas with his kine should chance this way
to trudge!

COMATAS.

Nay, I want no Lycopas. But hail yon woodsman, do:
'Tis Morson—see! his arms are full of bracken—
there, by you.

LACON.

We'll hail him.

COMATAS.

Ay, you hail him.

LACON.

Friend, 'twill not take thee long:
We're striving which is master, we twain, in woodland song:
And thou, my good friend Morson, ne'er look with favouring eyes
On me; nor yet to yonder lad be fain to judge the prize.

COMATAS.

Nay, by the Nymphs, sweet Morson, ne'er for Comatas' sake
Stretch thou a point; nor e'er let *him* undue advantage take.
Sibyrtas owns yon wethers; a Thurian is he:
And here, my friend, Eumares' goats, of Sybaris, you may see.

LACON.

And who asked thee, thou naughty knave, to whom belonged these flocks,
Sibyrtas, or (it might be) me? Eh, thou'rt a chatterbox!

COMATAS.

The simple truth, most worshipful, is all that I allege:
I'm not for boasting. But thy wit hath all too keen
an edge.

LACON.

Come sing, if singing's in thee—and may our friend
get back
To town alive! Heaven help us, lad, how thy tongue
doth clack!

COMATAS. [*Sings*]

Daphnis the mighty minstrel was less precious to the
Nine
Than I. I offered yesterday two kids upon their
shrine.

LACON. [*Sings*]

Ay, but Apollo fancies me hugely: for him I rear
A lordly ram: and, look you, the Carnival is near.

COMATAS.

Twin kids hath every goat I milk, save two. My
maid, my own,
Eyes me and asks 'At milking time, rogue, art thou
all alone?'

LACON.

Go to! nigh twenty baskets doth Lacon fill with cheese:
Hath time to woo a sweetheart too upon the blossomed leas.

COMATAS.

Clarissa pelts her goatherd with apples, should he stray
By with his goats; and pouts her lip in a quaint charming way.

LACON.

Me too a darling smooth of face notes as I tend my flocks:
How maddeningly o'er that fair neck ripple those shining locks!

COMATAS.

Tho' dogrose and anemone are fair in their degree,
The rose that blooms by garden-walls still is the rose for me.

LACON.

Tho' acorns' cups are fair, their taste is bitterness, and still
I'll choose, for honeysweet are they, the apples of the hill.

COMATAS.

A cushat I will presently procure and give to her
Who loves me: I know where it sits; up in the juniper.

LACON.

Pooh! a soft fleece, to make a coat, I'll give the day I shear
My brindled ewe—(no hand but mine shall touch it)—to my dear.

COMATAS.

Back, lambs, from that wild-olive: and be content to browse
Here on the shoulder of the hill, beneath the myrtle boughs.

LACON.

Run, (will ye?) Ball and Dogstar, down from that oak tree, run:
And feed where Spot is feeding, and catch the morning sun.

COMATAS.

I have a bowl of cypress-wood: I have besides a cup:
Praxiteles designed them: for *her* they're treasured up.

LACON.

I have a dog who throttles wolves: he loves the sheep, and they
Love him: I'll give him to my dear, to keep wild beasts at bay.

COMATAS.

Ye locusts that o'erleap my fence, oh let my vines escape
Your clutches, I beseech you: the bloom is on the grape.

LACON.

Ye crickets, mark how nettled our friend the goat-herd is!
I ween, ye cost the reapers pangs as acute as his.

COMATAS.

Those foxes with their bushy tails, I hate to see them crawl
Round Micon's homestead and purloin his grapes at evenfall.

LACON.

I hate to see the beetles that come warping on the wind,
And climb Philondas' trees, and leave never a fig behind.

COMATAS.

Have you forgot that cudgelling I gave you? At each stroke
You grinned and twisted with a grace, and clung to yonder oak.

LACON.

That I've forgot—but I have not, how once Eumares tied
You to that selfsame oak-trunk, and tanned your unclean hide.

COMATAS.

There's some one ill—of heartburn. You note it, I presume,
Morson? Go quick, and fetch a squill from some old beldam's tomb.

LACON.

I think I'm stinging somebody, as Morson too perceives—
Go to the river and dig up a clump of sowbread-leaves.

COMATAS.

May Himera flow, not water, but milk: and may'st thou blush,
Crathis, with wine; and fruitage grow upon every rush.

LACON.

For me may Sybaris' fountain flow, pure honey: so that you,
My fair, may dip your pitcher each morn in honey-dew.

COMATAS.

My goats are fed on clover and goat's-delight: they tread
On lentisk leaves; or lie them down, ripe strawberries o'er their head.

LACON.

My sheep crop honeysuckle bloom, while all around them blows
In clusters rich the jasmine, as brave as any rose.

COMATAS.

I scorn my maid; for when she took my cushat, she did not
Draw with both hands my face to hers and kiss me on the spot.

LACON.

I love my love, and hugely: for, when I gave my flute,
I was rewarded with a kiss, a loving one to boot.

COMATAS.

Lacon, the nightingale should scarce be challenged by the jay,
Nor swan by hoopoe: but, poor boy, thou aye wert for a fray.

MORSON.

I bid the shepherd hold his peace. Comatas, unto you
I, Morson, do adjudge the lamb. You'll first make offering due
Unto the nymphs: then savoury meat you'll send to Morson too.

COMATAS.

By Pan I will! Snort, all my herd of he-goats: I shall now
O'er Lacon, shepherd as he is, crow ye shall soon see how.
I've won, and I could leap sky-high! Ye also dance and skip,
My hornèd ewes: in Sybaris' fount to-morrow all shall dip.
Ho! you, sir, with the glossy coat and dangerous crest; you dare
Look at a ewe, till I have slain my lamb, and ill you'll fare.
What! is he at his tricks again? He is, and he will get
(Or my name's not Comatas) a proper pounding yet.

IDYLL VI.

The Drawn Battle.

DAPHNIS. DAMŒTAS.

DAPHNIS the herdsman and Damœtas once
Had driven, Aratus, to the selfsame glen.
One chin was yellowing, one shewed half a beard.
And by a brookside on a summer noon
The pair sat down and sang; but Daphnis led
The song, for Daphnis was the challenger.

DAPHNIS

"See! Galatea pelts thy flock with fruit,
And calls their master 'Lack-love,' Polypheme.
Thou mark'st her not, blind, blind, but pipest aye
Thy wood-notes. See again, she smites thy dog:
Sea-ward the fleeced flocks' sentinel peers and barks,
And, through the clear wave visible to her still,
Careers along the gently babbling beach.
Look that he leap not on the maid new-risen

From her sea-bath and rend her dainty limbs.
She fools thee, near or far, like thistle-waifs
In hot sweet summer: flies from thee when wooed,
Unwooed pursues thee: risks all moves to win;
For, Polypheme, things foul seem fair to Love."

And then, due prelude made, Damœtas sang.

DAMŒTAS.

"I marked her pelt my dog, I was not blind,
By Pan, by this my one my precious eye
That bounds my vision now and evermore!
But Telemus the Seer, be his the woe,
His and his children's, that he promised me!
Yet do I too tease her; I pass her by,
Pretend to woo another:—and she hears
(Heaven help me!) and is faint with jealousy;
And hurrying from the sea-wave as if stung,
Scans with keen glance my grotto and my flock.
'Twas I hissed on the dog to bark at her;
For, when I loved her, he would whine and lay
His muzzle in her lap. These things she'll note
Mayhap, and message send on message soon:
But I will bar my door until she swear
To make me on this isle fair bridal-bed.
And I am less unlovely than men say.

I looked into the mere (the mere was calm),
And goodly seemed my beard, and goodly seemed
My solitary eye, and, half-revealed,
My teeth gleamed whiter than the Parian marl.
Thrice for good luck I spat upon my robe:
That learned I of the hag Cottytaris—her
Who fluted lately with Hippocoön's mowers."

Damœtas then kissed Daphnis lovingly:
One gave a pipe and one a goodly flute.
Straight to the shepherd's flute and herdsman's pipe
The younglings bounded in the soft green grass:
And neither was o'ermatched, but matchless both.

IDYLL VII.

Harvest-Home.

ONCE on a time did Eucritus and I
(With us Amyntas) to the riverside
Steal from the city. For Lycopeus' sons
Were that day busy with the harvest-home,
Antigenes and Phrasidemus, sprung
(If aught thou holdest by the good old names)
By Clytia from great Chalcon—him who erst
Planted one stalwart knee against the rock,
And lo, beneath his foot Burinè's rill
Brake forth, and at its side poplar and elm
Shewed aisles of pleasant shadow, greenly roofed
By tufted leaves. Scarce midway were we now,
Nor yet descried the tomb of Brasilas:
When, thanks be to the Muses, there drew near
A wayfarer from Crete, young Lycidas.
The horned herd was his care: a glance might tell
So much: for every inch a herdsman he.

Slung o'er his shoulder was a ruddy hide
Torn from a he-goat, shaggy, tangle-haired,
That reeked of rennet yet: a broad belt clasped
A patched cloak round his breast, and for a staff
A gnarled wild-olive bough his right hand bore.
Soon with a quiet smile he spoke—his eye
Twinkled, and laughter sat upon his lip:
"And whither ploddest thou thy weary way
Beneath the noontide sun, Simichidas?
For now the lizard sleeps upon the wall,
The crested lark folds now his wandering wing.
Dost speed, a bidden guest, to some reveller's board?
Or townward to the treading of the grape?
For lo! recoiling from thy hurrying feet
The pavement-stones ring out right merrily."
Then I: "Friend Lycid, all men say that none
Of haymakers or herdsmen is thy match
At piping: and my soul is glad thereat.
Yet, to speak sooth, I think to rival thee.
Now look, this road holds holiday to-day:
For banded brethren solemnise a feast
To richly-dight Demeter, thanking her
For her good gifts: since with no grudging hand
Hath the boon goddess filled the wheaten floors.
So come: the way, the day, is thine as mine:
Try we our woodcraft—each may learn from each.

I am, as thou, a clarion-voice of song;
All hail me chief of minstrels. But I am not,
Heaven knows, o'ercredulous: no, I scarce can yet
(I think) outvie Philetas, nor the bard
Of Samos, champion of Sicilian song.
They are as cicadas challenged by a frog."

I spake to gain mine ends; and laughing light
He said: "Accept this club, as thou'rt indeed
A born truth-teller, shaped by heaven's own hand!
I hate your builders who would rear a house
High as Oromedon's mountain-pinnacle:
I hate your song-birds too, whose cuckoo-cry
Struggles (in vain) to match the Chian bard.
But come, we'll sing forthwith, Simichidas,
Our woodland music: and for my part I—
List, comrade, if you like the simple air
I forged among the uplands yesterday.

[*Sings*] Safe be my true-love convoyed o'er the main
To Mitylenè—though the southern blast
Chase the lithe waves, while westward slant the Kids,
Or low above the verge Orion stand—
If from Love's furnace she will rescue me,
For Lycidas is parched with hot desire.
Let halcyons lay the sea-waves and the winds,

Northwind and Westwind, that in shores far-off
Flutters the seaweed—halcyons, of all birds
Whose prey is on the waters, held most dear
By the green Nereids: yea let all things smile
On her to Mitylenè voyaging,
And in fair harbour may she ride at last.
I on that day, a chaplet woven of dill
Or rose or simple violet on my brow,
Will draw the wine of Pteleas from the cask
Stretched by the ingle. They shall roast me beans,
And elbow-deep in thyme and asphodel
And quaintly-curling parsley shall be piled
My bed of rushes, where in royal ease
I sit and, thinking of my darling, drain
With stedfast lip the liquor to the dregs.
I'll have a pair of pipers, shepherds both,
This from Acharnæ, from Lycopè that;
And Tityrus shall be near me and shall sing
How the swain Daphnis loved the stranger-maid;
And how he ranged the fells, and how the oaks
(Such oaks as Himera's banks are green withal)
Sang dirges o'er him waning fast away
Like snow on Athos, or on Hæmus high,
Or Rhodopè, or utmost Caucasus.
And he shall sing me how the big chest held
(All through the maniac malice of his lord)

A living goatherd: how the round-faced bees,
Lured from their meadow by the cedar-smell,
Fed him with daintiest flowers, because the Muse
Had made his throat a well-spring of sweet song.
Happy Comatas, this sweet lot was thine!
Thee the chest prisoned, for thee the honey-bees
Toiled, as thou slavedst out the mellowing year:
And oh hadst thou been numbered with the quick
In my day! I had led thy pretty goats
About the hill-side, listening to thy voice:
While thou hadst laid thee down 'neath oak or pine,
Divine Comatas, warbling pleasantly."

He spake and paused; and thereupon spake I.
"I too, friend Lycid, as I ranged the fells,
Have learned much lore and pleasant from the Nymphs,
Whose fame mayhap hath reached the throne of Zeus.
But this wherewith I'll grace thee ranks the first:
Thou listen, since the Muses like thee well.

[*Sings*] On me the young Loves sneezed: for hapless I
Am fain of Myrto as the goats of Spring.
But my best friend Aratus inly pines
For one who loves him not. Aristis saw—
(A wondrous seer is he, whose lute and lay

Shrinèd Apollo's self would scarce disdain)—
How love had scorched Aratus to the bone.
O Pan, who hauntest Homolè's fair champaign,
Bring the soft charmer, whosoe'er it be,
Unbid to his sweet arms—so, gracious Pan,
May ne'er thy ribs and shoulderblades be lashed
With squills by young Arcadians, whensoe'er
They are scant of supper! But should this my prayer
Mislike thee, then on nettles mayest thou sleep,
Dinted and sore all over from their claws!
Then mayest thou lodge amid Edonian hills
By Hebrus, in midwinter; there subsist,
The Bear thy neighbour: and, in summer, range
With the far Æthiops 'neath the Blemmyan rocks
Where Nile is no more seen! But O ye Loves,
Whose cheeks are like pink apples, quit your homes
By Hyetis, or Byblis' pleasant rill,
Or fair Dionè's rocky pedestal,
And strike that fair one with your arrows, strike
The ill-starred damsel who disdains my friend.
And lo, what is she but an o'er-ripe pear?
The girls all cry 'Her bloom is on the wane.'
We'll watch, Aratus, at that porch no more,
Nor waste shoe-leather: let the morning cock
Crow to wake others up to numb despair!
Let Molon, and none else, that ordeal brave:

While we make ease our study, and secure
Some witch, to charm all evil from our door."

I ceased. He, smiling sweetly as before,
Gave me the staff, 'the Muses' parting gift,'
And leftward sloped tow'rd Pyxa. We the while
Bent us to Phrasydeme's, Eucritus and I,
And baby-faced Amyntas: there we lay
Half-buried in a couch of fragrant reed
And fresh-cut vineleaves, who so glad as we?
A wealth of elm and poplar shook o'er head:
Hard by a sacred spring flowed gurgling on
From the Nymphs' grot, and in the sombre boughs
The sweet cicada chirped laboriously.
Hid in the thick thorn-bushes far away
The treefrog's note was heard; the crested lark
Sang with the goldfinch; turtles made their moan,
And o'er the fountain hung the gilded bee.
All of rich summer smacked, of autumn all:
Pears at our feet, and apples at our side
Rolled in luxuriance; branches on the ground
Sprawled, overweighed with damsons; while we brushed
From the cask's head the crust of four long years.
Say, ye who dwell upon Parnassian peaks,
Nymphs of Castalia, did old Chiron e'er

Set before Heracles a cup so brave
In Pholus' cavern—did as nectarous draughts
Cause that Anapian shepherd, in whose hand
Rocks were as pebbles, Polypheme the strong,
Featly to foot it o'er the cottage lawns:—
As, ladies, ye bid flow that day for us
All by Demeter's shrine at harvest-home?
Beside whose cornstacks may I oft again
Plant my broad fan: while she stands by and smiles,
Poppies and cornsheaves on each laden arm.

IDYLL VIII.

The Triumph of Daphnis.

DAPHNIS. MENALCAS. A GOATHERD.

DAPHNIS, the gentle herdsman, met once, as legend tells,
Menalcas making with his flock the circle of the fells.
Both chins were gilt with coming beards: both lads could sing and play:
Menalcas glanced at Daphnis, and thus was heard to say:—
"Art thou for singing, Daphnis, lord of the lowing kine?
I say my songs are better, by what thou wilt, than thine."
Then in his turn spake Daphnis, and thus he made reply:
"O shepherd of the fleecy flock, thou pipest clear and high;
But come what will, Menalcas, thou ne'er wilt sing as I."

MENALCAS.

This art thou fain to ascertain, and risk a bet with me?

DAPHNIS.

This I full fain would ascertain, and risk a bet with thee.

MENALCAS.

But what, for champions such as we, would seem a fitting prize?

DAPHNIS.

I stake a calf; stake thou a lamb, its mother's self in size.

MENALCAS.

A lamb I'll venture never: for aye at close of day
Father and mother count the flock, and passing strict are they.

DAPHNIS.

Then what shall be the victor's fee? What wager wilt thou lay?

MENALCAS.

A pipe discoursing through nine mouths I made, full fair to view;

The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge true.
I'll risk it: risk my father's own is more than I dare do.

DAPHNIS.

A pipe discoursing through nine mouths, and fair, hath Daphnis too:
The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge true.
But yesterday I made it: this finger feels the pain
Still, where indeed the rifted reed hath cut it clean in twain.
But who shall be our umpire? who listen to our strain?

MENALCAS.

Suppose we hail yon goatherd; him at whose horned herd now
The dog is barking—yonder dog with white upon his brow.

Then out they called: the goatherd marked them, and up came he;
Then out they sang; the goatherd their umpire fain would be.

To shrill Menalcas' lot it fell to start the woodland lay:
Then Daphnis took it up. And thus Menalcas led the way.

MENALCAS.

"Rivers and vales, a glorious birth! Oh if Menalcas e'er
Piped aught of pleasant music in your ears:
Then pasture, nothing loth, his lambs; and let young Daphnis fare
No worse, should he stray hither with his steers."

DAPHNIS.

"Pastures and rills, a bounteous race! If Daphnis sang you e'er
Such songs as ne'er from nightingale have flowed;
Then to his herd your fatness lend; and let Menalcas share
Like boon, should e'er he wend along this road."

MENALCAS.

"'Tis spring, 'tis greenness everywhere; with milk the udders teem,
And all things that are young have life anew,
Where my sweet maiden wanders: but parched and withered seem,
When she departeth, lawn and shepherd too."

DAPHNIS.

"Fat are the sheep, the goats bear twins, the hives are thronged with bees,
Rises the oak beyond his natural growth,
Where falls my darling's footstep: but hungriness shall seize,
When she departeth, herd and herdsman both."

MENALCAS.

"Come, ram, with thy blunt-muzzled kids and sleek wives at thy side,
Where winds the brook by woodlands myriad-deep:
There is *her* haunt. Go, Stump-horn, tell her how Proteus plied
(A god) the shepherd's trade, with seals for sheep."

DAPHNIS.

"I ask not gold, I ask not the broad lands of a king;
I ask not to be fleeter than the breeze;
But 'neath this steep to watch my sheep, feeding as one, and fling
(Still clasping *her*) my carol o'er the seas."

MENALCAS.

"Storms are the fruit-tree's bane; the brook's, a summer hot and dry;
The stag's a woven net, a gin the dove's;

Mankind's, a soft sweet maiden. Others have pined
ere I:
Zeus! Father! hadst not thou thy lady-loves?

Thus far, in alternating strains, the lads their woes
rehearst:
Then each one gave a closing stave. Thus sang
Menalcas first:—

MENALCAS.

"O spare, good wolf, my weanlings! their milky
mothers spare!
Harm not the little lad that hath so many in his care!
What, Firefly, is thy sleep so deep? It ill befits a
hound,
Tending a boyish master's flock, to slumber over-
sound.
And, wethers, of this tender grass take, nothing coy,
your fill:
So, when it comes, the after-math shall find you feeding
still.
So! so! graze on, that ye be full, that not an udder
fail:
Part of the milk shall rear the lambs, and part shall
fill my pail."

Then Daphnis flung a carol out, as of a nightingale:—

DAPHNIS.

"Me from her grot but yesterday a girl of haughty brow
Spied as I passed her with my kine, and said, "How fair art thou!"
I vow that not one bitter word in answer did I say,
But, looking ever on the ground, went silently my way.
The heifer's voice, the heifer's breath, are passing sweet to me;
And sweet is sleep by summer-brooks upon the breezy lea:
As acorns are the green oak's pride, apples the apple-bough's;
So the cow glorieth in her calf, the cowherd in his cows."
Thus the two lads; then spoke the third, sitting his goats among:

GOATHERD.

"O Daphnis, lovely is thy voice, thy music sweetly sung;
Such song is pleasanter to me than honey on my tongue.
Accept this pipe, for thou hast won. And should there be some notes

That thou couldst teach me, as I plod alongside with
my goats,
I'll give thee for thy schooling this ewe, that horns
hath none:
Day after day she'll fill the can, until the milk o'errun."

Then how the one lad laughed and leaped and
clapped his hands for glee!
A kid that bounds to meet its dam might dance as
merrily.
And how the other inly burned, struck down by his
disgrace!
A maid first parting from her home might wear as sad
a face.

Thenceforth was Daphnis champion of all the
country side:
And won, while yet in topmost youth, a Naiad for his
bride.

IDYLL IX.

Pastorals.

DAPHNIS. MENALCAS. A SHEPHERD.

SHEPHERD.

A SONG from Daphnis! Open he the lay,
He open: and Menalcas follow next:
While the calves suck, and with the barren kine
The young bulls graze, or roam knee-deep in leaves,
And ne'er play truant. But a song from thee,
Daphnis—anon Menalcas will reply.

DAPHNIS.

Sweet is the chorus of the calves and kine,
And sweet the herdsman's pipe. But none may vie
With Daphnis; and a rush-strown bed is mine
Near a cool rill, where carpeted I lie
On fair white goatskins. From a hill-top high

The westwind swept me down the herd entire,
Cropping the strawberries: whence it comes that I
No more heed summer, with his breath of fire,
Than lovers heed the words of mother and of sire.

Thus Daphnis: and Menalcas answered thus:—

MENALCAS.

O Ætna, mother mine! A grotto fair,
Scooped in the rocks, have I: and there I keep
All that in dreams men picture! Treasured there
Are multitudes of she-goats and of sheep,
Swathed in whose wool from top to toe I sleep.
The fire that boils my pot, with oak or beech
Is piled—dry beech-logs when the snow lies deep;
And storm and sunshine, I disdain them each
As toothless sires a nut, when broth is in their reach.

I clapped applause, and straight produced my gifts:
A staff for Daphnis—'twas the handiwork
Of nature, in my father's acres grown:
Yet might a turner find no fault therewith.
I gave his mate a goodly spiral-shell:
We stalked its inmate on the Icarian rocks
And ate him, parted fivefold among five.

He blew forthwith the trumpet on his shell.
Tell, woodland Muse—and then farewell—what song
I, the chance-comer, sang before those twain.

SHEPHERD.

Ne'er let a falsehood scarify my tongue!
Crickets with crickets, ants with ants agree,
And hawks with hawks: and music sweetly sung,
Beyond all else, is grateful unto me.
Filled aye with music may my dwelling be!
Not slumber, not the bursting forth of Spring
So charms me, nor the flowers that tempt the bee,
As those sweet Sisters. He, on whom they fling
One gracious glance, is proof to Circè's blandishing.

IDYLL X.

The Two Workmen.

MILO. BATTUS.

WHAT now, poor o'erworked drudge, is on thy mind?
No more in even swathe thou layest the corn:
Thy fellow-reapers leave thee far behind,
As flocks a ewe that's footsore from a thorn.
By noon and midday what will be thy plight
If now, so soon, thy sickle fails to bite?

BATTUS.

Hewn from hard rocks, untired at set of sun,
Milo, didst ne'er regret some absent one?

MILO.

Not I. What time have workers for regret?

BATTUS.

Hath love ne'er kept thee from thy slumbers yet?

MILO.

Nay, heaven forbid! If once the cat taste cream!

BATTUS.

Milo, these ten days love hath been my dream.

MILO.

You drain your wine, while vinegar 's scarce with me.

BATTUS.

—Hence since last spring untrimmed my borders be.

MILO.

And what lass flouts thee?

BATTUS.

She whom we heard play
Amongst Hippocoön's reapers yesterday.

MILO.

Your sins have found you out—you're e'en served right:
You'll clasp a corn-crake in your arms all night.

BATTUS.

You laugh: but headstrong Love is blind no less
Than Plutus: talking big is foolishness.

MILO.

I talk not big. But lay the corn-ears low
And trill the while some love-song—easier so
Will seem your toil: you used to sing, I know.

BATTUS.

Maids of Pieria, of my slim lass sing!
One touch of yours ennobles everything.

[*Sings*]

Fairy Bombyca! thee do men report
  Lean, dusk, a gipsy: I alone nut-brown.
Violets and pencilled hyacinths are swart,
  Yet first of flowers they're chosen for a crown.
As goats pursue the clover, wolves the goat,
And cranes the ploughman, upon thee I dote.

Had I but Crœsus' wealth, we twain should stand
  Gold-sculptured in Love's temple; thou, thy lyre
(Ay or a rose or apple) in thy hand,
  I in my brave new shoon and dance-attire.
Fairy Bombyca! twinkling dice thy feet,
Poppies thy lips, thy ways none knows how sweet!

MILO.

Who dreamed what subtle strains our bumpkin wrought?
  How shone the artist in each measured verse!

Fie on the beard that I have grown for naught!
Mark, lad, these lines by glorious Lytierse.

[*Sings*]

O rich in fruit and cornblade: be this field
Tilled well, Demeter, and fair fruitage yield!

Bind the sheaves, reapers: lest one, passing, say—
'A fig for these, they're never worth their pay.'

Let the mown swathes look northward, ye who mow,
Or westward—for the ears grow fattest so.

Avoid a noontide nap, ye threshing men:
The chaff flies thickest from the corn-ears then.

Wake when the lark wakes; when he slumbers, close
Your work, ye reapers: and at noontide doze.

Boys, the frogs' life for me! They need not him
Who fills the flagon, for in drink they swim.

Better boil herbs, thou toiler after gain,
Than, splitting cummin, split thy hand in twain.

Strains such as these, I trow, befit them well
Who toil and moil when noon is at its height:
Thy meagre love-tale, bumpkin, thou shouldst tell
Thy grandam as she wakes up ere 'tis light.

IDYLL XI.

The Giant's Wooing.

METHINKS all nature hath no cure for Love,
Plaster or unguent, Nicias, saving one;
And this is light and pleasant to a man,
Yet hard withal to compass—minstrelsy.
As well thou wottest, being thyself a leech,
And a prime favourite of those Sisters nine.
'Twas thus our Giant lived a life of ease,
Old Polyphemus, when, the down scarce seen
On lip and chin, he wooed his ocean nymph:
No curlypated rose-and-apple wooer,
But a fell madman, blind to all but love.
Oft from the green grass foldward fared his sheep
Unbid: while he upon the windy beach,
Singing his Galatea, sat and pined
From dawn to dusk, an ulcer at his heart:
Great Aphroditè's shaft had fixed it there.
Yet found he that one cure: he sate him down
On the tall cliff, and seaward looked, and sang:—

"White Galatea, why disdain thy love?
White as a pressed cheese, delicate as the lamb,
Wild as the heifer, soft as summer grapes!
If sweet sleep chain me, here thou walk'st at large;
If sweet sleep loose me, straightway thou art gone,
Scared like a sheep that sees the gray wolf near.
I loved thee, maiden, when thou cam'st long since,
To pluck the hyacinth-blossom on the fell,
Thou and my mother, piloted by me.
I saw thee, see thee still, from that day forth
For ever; but 'tis naught, ay naught, to thee.
I know, sweet maiden, why thou art so coy:
Shaggy and huge, a single eyebrow spans
From ear to ear my forehead, whence one eye
Gleams, and an o'erbroad nostril tops my lip.
Yet I, this monster, feed a thousand sheep
That yield me sweetest draughts at milking-tide:
In summer, autumn, or midwinter, still
Fails not my cheese; my milkpail aye o'erflows.
Then I can pipe as ne'er did Giant yet,
Singing our loves—ours, honey, thine and mine—
At dead of night: and hinds I rear eleven
(Each with her fawn) and bearcubs four, for thee.
Oh come to me—thou shalt not rue the day—
And let the mad seas beat against the shore!
'Twere sweet to haunt my cave the livelong night:

Laurel, and cypress tall, and ivy dun,
And vines of sumptuous fruitage, all are there:
And a cold spring that pine-clad Ætna flings
Down from the white snow's midst, a draught for gods!
Who would not change for this the ocean-waves?

"But thou mislik'st my hair? Well, oaken logs
Are here, and embers yet aglow with fire.
Burn (if thou wilt) my heart out, and mine eye,
Mine only eye wherein is my delight.
Oh why was I not born a finny thing,
To float unto thy side and kiss thy hand,
Denied thy lips—and bring thee lilies white
And crimson-petalled poppies' dainty bloom!
Nay—summer hath his flowers and autumn his;
I could not bring all these the selfsame day.
Lo, should some mariner hither oar his road,
Sweet, he shall teach me straightway how to swim,
That haply I may learn what bliss ye find
In your sea-homes. O Galatea, come
Forth from yon waves, and coming forth forget
(As I do, sitting here) to get thee home:
And feed my flocks and milk them, nothing loth,
And pour the rennet in to fix my cheese!

"The blame's my mother's; she is false to me;
Spake thee ne'er yet one sweet word for my sake,

Though day by day she sees me pine and pine.
I'll feign strange throbbings in my head and feet
To anguish her—as I am anguished now."

O Cyclops, Cyclops, where are flown thy wits?
Go plait rush-baskets, lop the olive-boughs
To feed thy lambkins—'twere the shrewder part.
Chase not the recreant, milk the willing ewe:
The world hath Galateas fairer yet.

"—Many a fair damsel bids me sport with her
The livelong night, and smiles if I give ear.
On land at least I still am somebody."

Thus did the Giant feed his love on song,
And gained more ease than may be bought with gold.

IDYLL XII.

The Comrades.

THOU art come, lad, come! Scarce thrice hath dusk to day
Given place—but lovers in an hour grow gray.
As spring's more sweet than winter, grapes than thorns,
The ewe's fleece richer than her latest-born's;
As young girls' charms the thrice-wed wife's outshine,
As fawns are lither than the ungainly kine,
Or as the nightingale's clear notes outvie
The mingled music of all birds that fly;
So at thy coming passing glad was I.
I ran to greet thee e'en as pilgrims run
To beechen shadows from the scorching sun:
Oh if on us accordant Loves would breathe,
And our two names to future years bequeath!

'These twain'—let men say—'lived in olden days.
This was a *yokel* (in their country-phrase),

That was his *mate* (so talked these simple folk):
And lovingly they bore a mutual yoke.
The hearts of men were made of sterling gold,
When troth met troth, in those brave days of old.'

O Zeus, O gods who age not nor decay!
Let e'en two hundred ages roll away,
But at the last these tidings let me learn,
Borne o'er the fatal pool whence none return:—
"By every tongue thy constancy is sung,
Thine and thy favourite's—chiefly by the young."
But lo, the future is in heaven's high hand:
Meanwhile thy graces all my praise demand,
Not false lip-praise, not idly bubbling froth—
For though thy wrath be kindled, e'en thy wrath
Hath no sting in it: doubly I am caressed,
And go my way repaid with interest.

Oarsmen of Megara, ruled by Nisus erst!
Yours be all bliss, because ye honoured first
That true child-lover, Attic Diocles.
Around his gravestone with the first spring-breeze
Flock the bairns all, to win the kissing-prize:
And whoso sweetliest lip to lip applies
Goes crown-clad home to its mother. Blest is he
Who in such strife is named the referee:

To brightfaced Ganymede full oft he'll cry
To lend his lip the potencies that lie
Within that stone with which the usurers
Detect base metal, and which never errs.

IDYLL XIII.

Hylas.

NOT for us only, Nicias, (vain the dream,)
Sprung from what god soe'er, was Eros born:
Not to us only grace doth graceful seem,
Frail things who wot not of the coming morn.
No—for Amphitryon's iron-hearted son,
Who braved the lion, was the slave of one:—

A fair curled creature, Hylas was his name.
He taught him, as a father might his child,
All songs whereby himself had risen to fame;
Nor ever from his side would be beguiled
When noon was high, nor when white steeds convey
Back to heaven's gates the chariot of the day,

Nor when the hen's shrill brood becomes aware
Of bed-time, as the mother's flapping wings

Shadow the dust-browned beam. 'Twas all his care
To shape unto his own imaginings
And to the harness train his favourite youth,
Till he became a man in very truth.

Meanwhile, when kingly Jason steered in quest
Of the Gold Fleece, and chieftains at his side
Chosen from all cities, proffering each her best,
To rich Iolchos came that warrior tried,
And joined him unto trim-built Argo's crew;
And with Alcmena's son came Hylas too.

Through the great gulf shot Argo like a bird—
And by-and-bye reached Phasis, ne'er o'erta'en
By those in-rushing rocks, that have not stirred
Since then, but bask, twin monsters, on the main.
But now, when waned the spring, and lambs were fed
In far-off fields, and Pleiads gleamed o'erhead,

That cream and flower of knighthood looked to sail.
They came, within broad Argo safely stowed,
(When for three days had blown the southern gale)
To Hellespont, and in Propontis rode
At anchor, where Cianian oxen now
Broaden the furrows with the busy plough.

They leapt ashore, and, keeping rank, prepared
Their evening meal: a grassy meadow spread
Before their eyes, and many a warrior shared
(Thanks to its verdurous stores) one lowly bed.
And while they cut tall marigolds from their stem
And sworded bulrush, Hylas slipt from them.

Water the fair lad went to seek and bring
To Heracles and stalwart Telamon,
(The comrades aye partook each other's fare,)
Bearing a brazen pitcher. And anon,
Where the ground dipt, a fountain he espied,
And rushes growing green about its side.

There rose the sea-blue swallow-wort, and there
The pale-hued maidenhair, with parsley green
And vagrant marsh-flowers; and a revel rare
In the pool's midst the water-nymphs were seen
To hold, those maidens of unslumbrous eyes
Whom the belated peasant sees and flies.

And fast did Malis and Eunica cling,
And young Nychea with her April face,
To the lad's hand, as stooping o'er the spring
He dipt his pitcher. For the young Greek's grace

Made their soft senses reel; and down he fell,
All of a sudden, into that black well.

So drops a red star suddenly from sky
To sea—and quoth some sailor to his mate:
"Up with the tackle, boy! the breeze is high."
Him the nymphs pillowed, all disconsolate,
On their sweet laps, and with soft words beguiled;
But Heracles was troubled for the child.

Forth went he; Scythian-wise his bow he bore
And the great club that never quits his side;
And thrice called 'Hylas'—ne'er came lustier roar
From that deep chest. Thrice Hylas heard and tried
To answer, but in tones you scarce might hear;
The water made them distant though so near.

And as a lion, when he hears the bleat
Of fawns among the mountains far away,
A murderous lion, and with hurrying feet
Bounds from his lair to his predestined prey:
So plunged the strong man in the untrodden brake—
(Lovers are maniacs)—for his darling's sake.

He scoured far fields—what hill or oaken glen
Remembers not that pilgrimage of pain?
His troth to Jason was forgotten then.
Long time the good ship tarried for those twain
With hoisted sails; night came and still they cleared
The hatches, but no Heracles appeared.

On he was wandering, reckless where he trod,
So mad a passion on his vitals preyed:
While Hylas had become a blessèd god.
But the crew cursed the runaway who had stayed
Sixty good oars, and left him there to reach
Afoot bleak Phasis and the Colchian beach.

IDYLL. XIV.

The Love of Aeschines.

THYONICHUS. ÆSCHINES.

ÆSCHINES.

HAIL, sir Thyonichus.

THYONICHUS.

Æschines, to you.

ÆSCHINES.

I have missed thee.

THYONICHUS.

Missed me! Why what ails him now?

ÆSCHINES.

My friend, I am ill at ease.

THYONICHUS.

Then this explains
Thy leanness, and thy prodigal moustache

And dried-up curls. Thy counterpart I saw,
A wan Pythagorean, yesterday.
He said he came from Athens: shoes he had none:
He pined, I'll warrant,—for a quartern loaf.

ÆSCHINES.

Sir, you will joke—But I've been outraged, sore,
And by Cynisca. I shall go stark mad
Ere you suspect—a hair would turn the scale.

THYONICHUS

Such thou wert always, Æschines my friend.
In lazy mood or trenchant, at thy whim
The world must wag. But what 's thy grievance now?

ÆSCHINES.

That Argive, Apis the Thessalian Knight,
Myself, and gallant Cleonicus, supped
Within my grounds. Two pullets I had slain,
And a prime pig: and broached my Biblian wine;
'Twas four years old, but fragrant as when new.
Truffles were served to us: and the drink was good.
Well, we got on, and each must drain a cup
To whom he fancied; only each must name.
We named, and took our liquor as ordained;
But she sate silent—this before my face.

Fancy my feelings! "Wilt not speak? Hast seen
A wolf?" some wag said: "Shrewdly guessed," quoth she,
And blushed—her blushes might have fired a torch.
A wolf *had* charmed her: Wolf her neighbour's son,
Goodly and tall, and fair in divers eyes:
For his illustrious sake it was she pined.
This had been breathed, just idly, in my ear:
Shame on my beard, I ne'er pursued the hint.
Well, when we four were deep amid our cups,
The Knight must sing 'The Wolf' (a local song)
Right through, for mischief. All at once she wept
Hot tears as girls of six years old might weep,
Clinging and clamouring round their mother's lap.
And I, (you know my humour, friend of mine,)
Drove at his face, one, two! She gathered up
Her robes and vanished straightway through the door.
"And so I fail to please, false lady mine?
Another lies more welcome in thy lap?
Go warm that other's heart: he'll say thy tears
Are liquid pearls." And as a swallow flies
Forth in a hurry, here or there to find
A mouthful for her brood among the eaves:
From her soft sofa passing-swift she fled
Through folding-doors and hall, with random feet:
'*The stag had gained his heath*': you know the rest.

Three weeks, a month, nine days and ten to that,
To-day 's the eleventh: and 'tis just two months
All but two days, since she and I were two.
Hence is my beard of more than Thracian growth.
Now Wolf is all to her: Wolf enters in
At midnight; I am a cypher in her eyes;
The poor Megarian, nowhere in the race.
All would go right, if I could once *unlove*:
But now, you wot, the rat hath tasted tar.
And what may cure a swain at his wit's end
I know not: Simus, (true,) a mate of mine,
Loved Epichalcus' daughter, and took ship
And came home cured. I too will sail the seas.
Worse men, it may be better, are afloat,
I shall still prove an average man-at-arms.

THYONICHUS.

Now may thy love run smoothly, Æschines!
But should'st thou really mean a voyage out,
The freeman's best paymaster 's Ptolemy.

ÆSCHINES.

What is he else?

THYONICHUS.

A gentleman: a man
Of wit and taste; the top of company;

Loyal to ladies; one whose eye is keen
For friends, and keener still for enemies.
Large in his bounties, he, in kingly sort,
Denies a boon to none: but, Æschines,
One should not ask too often. This premised,
If thou wilt clasp the military cloak
O'er thy right shoulder, and with legs astride
Await the onward rush of shielded men:
Hie thee to Egypt. Age o'ertakes us all;
Our temples first; then on o'er cheek and chin,
Slowly and surely, creep the frosts of Time.
Up and do somewhat, ere thy limbs are sere.

IDYLL XV.

The Festival of Adonis.

GORGO. PRAXINOÄ.

GORGO.

PRAXINOÄ in?

PRAXINOÄ.

Yes, Gorgo dear! At last!
That you're here now's a marvel! See to a chair,
A cushion, Eunoä!

GORGO.

I lack naught.

PRAXINOÄ.

Sit down.

GORGO.

Oh, what a thing is spirit! Here I am,
Praxinoä, safe at last from all that crowd

And all those chariots—every street a mass
Of boots and uniforms! And the road, my dear,
Seemed endless—you live now so far away!

PRAXINOÄ.

This land's-end den—I cannot call it house—
My madcap hired to keep us twain apart
And stir up strife. 'Twas like him, odious pest!

GORGO.

Nay call not, dear, your lord, your Deinon, names
To the babe's face. Look how it stares at you!
There, baby dear, she never meant Papa!
It understands, by'r lady! Dear Papa!

PRAXINOÄ.

Well, yesterday (that means what day you like)
'Papa' had rouge and hair-powder to buy;
He brought back salt! this oaf of six-foot-one!

GORGO.

Just such another is that pickpocket
My Diocleides. He bought t' other day
Six fleeces at seven drachms, his last exploit.
What were they? scraps of worn-out pedlar's-bags,
Sheer trash.—But put your cloak and mantle on;

And we'll to Ptolemy's, the sumptuous king,
To see the *Adonis*. As I hear, the queen
Provides us something gorgeous.

PRAXINOÄ.

Ay, the grand
Can do things grandly.

GORGO.

When you've seen yourself,
What tales you'll have to tell to those who've not.
'Twere time we started!

PRAXINOÄ.

All time's holiday
With idlers! Eunoä, pampered minx, the jug!
Set it down here—you cats would sleep all day
On cushions—Stir yourself, fetch water, quick!
Water's our first want. How she holds the jug!
Now, pour—not, cormorant, in that wasteful way—
You've drenched my dress, bad luck t' you! There, enough:
I have made such toilet as my fates allowed.
Now for the key o' the plate-chest. Bring it, quick!

GORGO.

My dear, that full pelisse becomes you well.

What did it stand you in, straight off the loom?

PRAXINOÄ.

Don't ask me, Gorgo: two good pounds and more.
Then I gave all my mind to trimming it.

GORGO.

Well, 'tis a great success.

PRAXINOÄ.

I think it is.
My mantle, Eunoä, and my parasol!
Arrange me nicely. Babe, you'll bide at home!
Horses would bite you—Boo!—Yes, cry your fill,
But we won't have you maimed. Now let's be off.
You, Phrygia, take and nurse the tiny thing:
Call the dog in: make fast the outer door!

[*Exeunt.*

Gods! what a crowd! How, when shall we get past
This nuisance, these unending ant-like swarms?
Yet, Ptolemy, we owe thee thanks for much
Since heaven received thy sire! No miscreant now
Creeps Thug-like up, to maul the passer-by.
What games men played erewhile—men shaped in crime,

Birds of a feather, rascals every one!
—We're done for, Gorgo darling—here they are,
The Royal horse! Sweet sir, don't trample me!
That bay—the savage!—reared up straight on end!
Fly, Eunoä, can't you? Doggedly she stands.
He'll be his rider's death!—How glad I am
My babe's at home.

GORGO.

Praxinoä, never mind!
See, we're before them now, and they're in line.

PRAXINOÄ.

There, I'm myself. But from a child I feared
Horses, and slimy snakes. But haste we on:
A surging multitude is close behind.

GORGO [*to Old Lady*].

From the palace, mother?

OLD LADY.

Ay, child.

GORGO.

Is it fair
Of access?

OLD LADY.

Trying brought the Greeks to Troy.
Young ladies, they must try who would succeed.

GORGO.

The crone hath said her oracle and gone.
Women know all—how Adam married Eve.
—Praxinoä, look what crowds are round the door!

PRAXINOÄ.

Fearful! Your hand, please, Gorgo. Eunoä, you
Hold Eutychis—hold tight or you'll be lost.
We'll enter in a body—hold us fast!
Oh dear, my muslin dress is torn in two,
Gorgo, already! Pray, good gentleman,
(And happiness be yours) respect my robe!

STRANGER.

I could not if I would—nathless I will.

PRAXINOÄ.

They come in hundreds, and they push like swine.

STRANGER.

Lady, take courage: it is all well now.

PRAXINOÄ.

And now and ever be it well with thee,
Sweet man, for shielding us! An honest soul
And kindly. Oh! they're smothering Eunoä:
Push, coward! That's right! 'All in,' the bride-
groom said
And locked the door upon himself and bride.

GORGO.

Praxinoä, look! Note well this broidery first.
How exquisitely fine—too good for earth!
Empress Athenè, what strange sempstress wrought
Such work? What painter painted, realized
Such pictures? Just like life they stand or move,
Facts and not fancies! What a thing is man!
How bright, how lifelike on his silvern couch
Lies, with youth's bloom scarce shadowing his cheek,
That dear Adonis, lovely e'en in death!

A STRANGER.

Bad luck t' you, cease your senseless pigeon's prate!
Their brogue is killing—every word a drawl!

GORGO.

Where did he spring from? Is our prattle aught
To you, Sir? Order your own slaves about:
You're ordering Syracusan ladies now!

Corinthians bred (to tell you one fact more)
As was Bellerophon: islanders in speech,
For Dorians may talk Doric, I presume?

PRAXINOÄ.

Persephonè! none lords it over me,
Save one! No scullion's-wage for us from *you*.

GORGO.

Hush, dear. The Argive's daughter's going to sing
The Adonis: that accomplished vocalist
Who has no rival in "*The Sailor's Grave.*"
Observe her attitudinizing now.

Song.

Queen, who lov'st Golgi and the Sicel hill
And Ida; Aphroditè radiant-eyed;
The stealthy-footed Hours from Acheron's rill
Brought once again Adonis to thy side
How changed in twelve short months! They travel slow,
Those precious Hours: we hail their advent still,
For blessings do they bring to all below.
O Sea-born! thou didst erst, or legend lies,
Shed on a woman's soul thy grace benign,
And Berenicè's dust immortalize.

O called by many names, at many a shrine!
For thy sweet sake doth Berenicè's child
(Herself a second Helen) deck with all
That's fair, Adonis. On his right are piled
Ripe apples fallen from the oak-tree tall;
And silver caskets at his left support
Toy-gardens, Syrian scents enshrined in gold
And alabaster, cakes of every sort
That in their ovens the pastrywomen mould,
When with white meal they mix all flowers that bloom,
Oil-cakes and honey-cakes. There stand portrayed
Each bird, each butterfly; and in the gloom
Of foliage climbing high, and downward weighed
By graceful blossoms, do the young Loves play
Like nightingales, and perch on every tree,
And flit, to try their wings, from spray to spray.
Then see the gold, the ebony! Only see
The ivory-carven eagles, bearing up
To Zeus the boy who fills his royal cup!
Soft as a dream, such tapestry gleams o'erhead
As the Milesian's self would gaze on, charmed.
But sweet Adonis hath his own sweet bed:
Next Aphroditè sleeps the roseate-armed,
A bridegroom of eighteen or nineteen years.
Kiss the smooth boyish lip—there's no sting there!

The bride hath found her own: all bliss be hers!
And him at dewy dawn we'll troop to bear
Down where the breakers hiss against the shore:
There, with dishevelled dress and unbound hair,
Bare-bosomed all, our descant wild we'll pour:

"Thou haunt'st, Adonis, earth and heaven in turn,
Alone of heroes. Agamemnon ne'er
Could compass this, nor Aias stout and stern:
Not Hector, eldest-born of her who bare
Ten sons, not Patrocles, nor safe-returned
From Ilion Pyrrhus, such distinction earned:
Nor, elder yet, the Lapithæ, the sons
Of Pelops and Deucalion; or the crown
Of Greece, Pelasgians. Gracious may'st thou be,
Adonis, now: pour new-year's blessings down!
Right welcome dost thou come, Adonis dear:
Come when thou wilt, thou'lt find a welcome here."

GORGO.

'Tis fine, Praxinoä! How I envy her
Her learning, and still more her luscious voice!
We must go home: my husband's supperless:
And, in that state, the man's just vinegar.
Don't cross his path when hungry! So farewell,
Adonis, and be housed 'mid welfare aye!

IDYLL XVI.

The Value of Song.

WHAT fires the Muse's, what the minstrel's lays?
Hers some immortal's, ours some hero's praise,
Heaven is her theme, as heavenly was her birth:
We, of earth earthy, sing the sons of earth.
Yet who, of all that see the gray morn rise,
Lifts not his latch and hails with eager eyes
My Songs, yet sends them guerdonless away?
Barefoot and angry homeward journey they,
Taunt him who sent them on that idle quest,
Then crouch them deep within their empty chest,
(When wageless they return, their dismal bed)
And hide on their chill knees once more their patient head.
Where are those good old times? Who thanks us, who,
For our good word? Men list not now to do
Great deeds and worthy of the minstrel's verse:
Vassals of gain, their hand is on their purse,
Their eyes on lucre: ne'er a rusty nail
They'll give in kindness; this being aye their tale:—

"Kin before kith; to prosper is my prayer;
Poets, we know, are heaven's peculiar care.
We've Homer; and what other's worth a thought?
I call him chief of bards who costs me naught."

Yet what if all your chests with gold are lined?
Is this enjoying wealth? Oh fools and blind!
Part on your heart's desire, on minstrels spend
Part; and your kindred and your kind befriend:
And daily to the gods bid altar-fires ascend.
Nor be ye churlish hosts, but glad the heart
Of guests with wine, when they must needs depart:
And reverence most the priests of sacred song:
So, when hell hides you, shall your names live long;
Not doomed to wail on Acheron's sunless sands,
Like some poor hind, the inward of whose hands
The spade hath gnarled and knotted, born to groan,
Poor sire's poor offspring, hapless Penury's own!

Their monthly dole erewhile unnumbered thralls
Sought in Antiochus', in Aleuas' halls;
On to the Scopadæ's byres in endless line
The calves ran lowing with the hornèd kine;
And, marshalled by the good Creondæ's swains
Myriads of choice sheep basked on Cranron's plains.
Yet had their joyaunce ended, on the day

When their sweet spirit dispossessed its clay,
To hated Acheron's ample barge resigned.
Nameless, their stored-up luxury left behind,
With the lorn dead through ages had they lain,
Had not a minstrel bade them live again :—
Had not in woven words the Ceïan sire
Holding sweet converse with his full-toned lyre
Made even their swift steeds for aye renowned,
When from the sacred lists they came home crowned.
Forgot were Lycia's chiefs, and Hector's hair
Of gold, and Cycnus femininely fair ;
But that bards bring old battles back to mind.
Odysseus—he who roamed amongst mankind
A hundred years and more, reached utmost hell
Alive, and 'scaped the giant's hideous cell—
Had lived and died : Eumæus and his swine ;
Philœtius, busy with his herded kine ;
And great Laërtes' self, had passed away,
Were not their names preserved in Homer's lay.
Through song alone may man true glory taste ;
The dead man's riches his survivors waste.

But count the waves, with yon gray wind-swept main
Borne shoreward : from a red brick wash his stain
In some pool's violet depths : 'twill task thee yet
To reach the heart on baleful avarice set.

To such I say 'Fare well': let theirs be store
Of wealth; but let them always crave for more:
Horses and mules inferior things *I* find
To the esteem and love of all mankind.

But to what mortal's roof may I repair,
I and my Muse, and find a welcome there?
I and my Muse: for minstrels fare but ill,
Reft of those maids, who know the mightiest's will.
The cycle of the years, it flags not yet;
In many a chariot many a steed shall sweat:
And one, to manhood grown, my lays shall claim,
Whose deeds shall rival great Achilles' fame,
Who from stout Aias might have won the prize
On Simois' plain, where Phrygian Ilus lies.
Now, in their sunset home on Libya's heel,
Phœnicia's sons unwonted chillness feel:
Now, with his targe of willow at his breast,
The Syracusan bears his spear in rest,
Amongst these Hiero arms him for the war,
Eager to fight as warriors fought of yore;
The plumes float darkling o'er his helmèd brow.
O Zeus, the sire most glorious; and O thou,
Empress Athenè; and thou, damsel fair,
Who with thy mother wast decreed to bear
Rule o'er rich Corinth, o'er that city of pride

Beside whose walls Anapus' waters glide:—
May ill winds waft across the Southern sea
(Of late a legion, now but two or three,)
Far from our isle, our foes; the doom to tell,
To wife and child, of those they loved so well;
While the old race enjoy once more the lands
Spoiled and insulted erst by alien hands!

And fair and fruitful may their cornlands be!
Their flocks in thousands bleat upon the lea,
Fat and full-fed; their kine, as home they wind,
The lagging traveller of his rest remind!
With might and main their fallows let them till:
Till comes the seedtime, and cicalas trill
(Hid from the toilers of the hot midday
In the thick leafage) on the topmost spray!
O'er shield and spear their webs let spiders spin,
And none so much as name the battle-din!
Then Hiero's lofty deeds may minstrels bear
Beyond the Scythian ocean-main, and where
Within those ample walls, with asphalt made
Time-proof, Semiramis her empire swayed.
I am but a single voice: but many a bard
Beside me do those heavenly maids regard:
May those all love to sing, 'mid earth's acclaim,
Of Sicel Arethuse, and Hiero's fame.

O Graces, royal nurselings, who hold dear
The Minyæ's city, once the Theban's fear:
Unbidden I tarry, whither bidden I fare
My Muse my comrade. And be ye too there,
Sisters divine! Were ye and song forgot,
What grace had earth? With you be aye my lot!

IDYLL XVII.

The Praise of Ptolemy.

WITH Zeus begin, sweet sisters, end with Zeus,
When ye would sing the sovereign of the skies:
But first among mankind rank Ptolemy;
First, last, and midmost; being past compare.
Those mighty ones of old, half men half gods,
Wrought deeds that shine in many a subtle strain·
I, no unpractised minstrel, sing but him;
Divinest ears disdain not minstrelsy.
But as a woodman sees green Ida rise
Pine above pine, and ponders which to fell
First of those myriads; even so I pause
Where to begin the chapter of his praise:
For thousand and ten thousand are the gifts
Wherewith high heaven hath graced the kingliest king.

Was not he born to compass noblest ends,
Lagus' own son, so soon as he matured

Schemes such as ne'er had dawned on meaner minds?
Zeus doth esteem him as the blessèd gods;
In the sire's courts his golden mansion stands.
And near him Alexander sits and smiles,
The turbaned Persian's dread; and, fronting both,
Rises the stedfast adamantine seat
Erst fashioned for the bull-slayer Heracles.
Who there holds revels with his heavenly mates,
And sees, with joy exceeding, children rise
On children; for that Zeus exempts from age
And death their frames who sprang from Heracles:
And Ptolemy, like Alexander, claims
From him; his gallant son their common sire.
And when, the banquet o'er, the Strong Man wends,
Cloyed with rich nectar, home unto his wife,
This kinsman hath in charge his cherished shafts
And bow; and that his gnarled and knotted club;
And both to white-limbed Hebè's bower of bliss
Convoy the bearded warrior and his arms.

Then how among wise ladies—blest the pair
That reared her!—peerless Berenicè shone!
Dionè's sacred child, the Cyprian queen,
O'er that sweet bosom passed her taper hands:
And hence, 'tis said, no man loved woman e'er
As Ptolemy loved her. She o'er-repaid

His love; so, nothing doubting, he could leave
His substance in his loyal children's care,
And rest with her, fond husband with fond wife.
She that loves not bears sons, but all unlike
Their father: for her heart was otherwhere.

O Aphroditê, matchless e'en in heaven
For beauty, thou didst love her; wouldst not let
Thy Berenicè cross the wailful waves:
But thy hand snatched her—to the blue lake bound
Else, and the dead's grim ferryman—and enshrined
With thee, to share thy honours. There she sits,
To mortals ever kind, and passion soft
Inspires, and makes the lover's burden light.
The dark-browed Argive, linked with Tydeus, bare
Diomed the slayer, famed in Calydon:
And deep-veiled Thetis unto Peleus gave
The javelineer Achilles. Thou wast born
Of Berenicè, Ptolemy by name
And by descent, a warrior's warrior child.
Cos from its mother's arms her babe received,
Its destined nursery, on its natal day:
'Twas there Antigonè's daughter in her pangs
Cried to the goddess that could bid them cease:
Who soon was at her side, and lo! her limbs
Forgat their anguish, and a child was born

Fair, its sire's self. Cos saw, and shouted loud;
Handled the babe all tenderly, and spake:

"Wake, babe, to bliss: prize me, as Phœbus doth
His azure-spherèd Delos: grace the hill
Of Triops, and the Dorians' sister shores,
As king Apollo his Rhenæa's isle."

So spake the isle. An eagle high o'erhead
Poised in the clouds screamed thrice, the prophet-bird
Of Zeus, and sent by him. For awful kings
All are his care, those chiefliest on whose birth
He smiled: exceeding glory waits on them:
Theirs is the sovereignty of land and sea.
But if a myriad realms spread far and wide
O'er earth, if myriad nations till the soil
To which heaven's rain gives increase: yet what land
Is green as low-lying Egypt, when the Nile
Wells forth and piecemeal breaks the sodden glebe?
Where are like cities, peopled by like men?
Lo he hath seen three hundred towns arise,
Three thousand, yea three myriad; and o'er all
He rules, the prince of heroes, Ptolemy.
Claims half Phœnicia, and half Araby,
Syria and Libya, and the Æthiops murk

Sways the Pamphylian and Cilician braves,
The Lycian and the Carian trained to war,
And all the isles: for never fleet like his
Rode upon ocean: land and sea alike
And sounding rivers hail king Ptolemy.
Many are his horsemen, many his targeteers,
Whose burdened breast is bright with clashing steel:
Light are all royal treasuries, weighed with his.
For wealth from all climes travels day by day
To his rich realm, a hive of prosperous peace.
No foeman's tramp scares monster-peopled Nile,
Waking to war her far-off villages:
No armèd robber from his war-ship leaps
To spoil the herds of Egypt. Such a prince
Sits throned in her broad plains, in whose right arm
Quivers the spear, the bright-haired Ptolemy.
Like a true king, he guards with might and main
The wealth his sires' arm won him and his own.
Nor strown all idly o'er his sumptuous halls
Lie piles that seem the work of labouring ants.
The holy homes of gods are rich therewith;
Theirs are the firstfruits, earnest aye of more.
And freely mighty kings thereof partake,
Freely great cities, freely honoured friends.
None entered e'er the sacred lists of song,
Whose lips could breathe sweet music, but he gained

Fair guerdon at the hand of Ptolemy.
And Ptolemy do music's votaries hymn
For his good gifts—hath man a fairer lot
Than to have earned much fame among mankind?
The Atridæ's name abides, while all the wealth
Won from the sack of Priam's stately home
A mist closed o'er it, to be seen no more.
Ptolemy, he only, treads a path whose dust
Burns with the footprints of his ancestors,
And overlays those footprints with his own.
He raised rich shrines to mother and to sire,
There reared their forms in ivory and gold,
Passing in beauty, to befriend mankind.
Thighs of fat oxen oftentimes he burns
On crimsoning altars, as the months roll on,
Ay he and his staunch wife. No fairer bride
E'er clasped her lord in royal palaces:
And her heart's love her brother-husband won.
In such blest union joined the immortal pair
Whom queenly Rhea bore, and heaven obeys:
One couch the maiden of the rainbow decks
With myrrh-dipt hands for Hera and for Zeus.

Now farewell, prince! I rank thee aye with gods:
And read this lesson to the afterdays,
Mayhap they'll prize it: 'Honour is of Zeus.'

IDYLL XVIII.

The Bridal of Helen.

WHILOM, in Lacedæmon,
Tript many a maiden fair
To gold-tressed Menelaus' halls,
With hyacinths in her hair:
Twelve to the Painted Chamber,
The queenliest in the land,
The clustered loveliness of Greece,
Came dancing hand in hand.
For Helen, Tyndarus' daughter,
Had just been wooed and won,
Helen the darling of the world,
By Atreus' younger son:
With woven steps they beat the floor
In unison, and sang
Their bridal-hymn of triumph
Till all the palace rang.

"Slumberest so soon, sweet bridegroom?
Art thou o'erfond of sleep?
Or hast thou leadenweighted limbs?
Or hadst thou drunk too deep
When thou didst fling thee to thy lair?
Betimes thou should'st have sped,
If sleep were all thy purpose,
Unto thy bachelor's bed:
And left her in her mother's arms
To nestle, and to play
A girl among her girlish mates
Till deep into the day:—
For not alone for this night,
Nor for the next alone,
But through the days and through the years
Thou hast her for thine own.

"Nay! heaven, O happy bridegroom,
Smiled as thou enteredst in
To Sparta, like thy brother kings,
And told thee thou should'st win!
What hero son-in-law of Zeus
Hath e'er aspired to be?
Yet lo! one coverlet enfolds
The child of Zeus, and thee.

Ne'er did a thing so lovely
Roam the Achaian lea.

"And who shall match her offspring,
If babes are like their mother?
For we were playmates once, and ran
And raced with one another
(All varnished, warrior fashion)
Along Eurotas' tide,
Thrice eighty gentle maidens,
Each in her girlhood's pride:
Yet none of all seemed faultless,
If placed by Helen's side.

"As peers the nascent Morning
Over thy shades, O Night,
When Winter disenchains the land,
And Spring goes forth in white:
So Helen shone above us,
All loveliness and light.

"As climbs aloft some cypress,
Garden or glade to grace;
As the Thessalian courser lends
A lustre to the race:

So bright o'er Lacedæmon
Shone Helen's rosebud face.

"And who into the basket e'er
The yarn so deftly drew,
Or through the mazes of the web
So well the shuttle threw,
And severed from the framework
As closelywov'n a warp:—
And who could wake with masterhand
Such music from the harp,
To broadlimbed Pallas tuning
And Artemis her lay—
As Helen, Helen in whose eyes
The Loves for ever play?

"O bright, O beautiful, for thee
Are matron-cares begun.
We to green paths and blossomed meads
With dawn of morn must run,
And cull a breathing chaplet;
And still our dream shall be,
Helen, of thee, as weanling lambs
Yearn in the pasture for the dams
That nursed their infancy.

For thee the lowly lotus-bed
We'll spoil, and plait a crown
To hang upon the shadowy plane;
For thee will we drop down
('Neath that same shadowy platan)
Oil from our silver urn;
And carven on the bark shall be
This sentence, 'HALLOW HELEN'S TREE';
In Dorian letters, legibly
For all men to discern.

"Now farewell, bride, and bridegroom
Blest in thy new-found sire!
May Leto, mother of the brave,
Bring babes at your desire,
And holy Cypris either's breast
With mutual transport fire:
And Zeus the son of Cronos
Grant blessings without end,
From princely sire to princely son
For ever to descend.

"Sleep on, and love and longing
Breathe in each other's breast;
But fail not when the morn returns
To rouse you from your rest:

With dawn shall we be stirring,
When, lifting high his fair
And feathered neck, the earliest bird
To clarion to the dawn is heard.
O god of brides and bridals,
Sing 'Happy, happy pair!'"

IDYLL XIX.

Love Stealing Honey.

ONCE thievish Love the honeyed hives would rob,
When a bee stung him: soon he felt a throb
Through all his finger-tips, and, wild with pain,
Blew on his hands and stamped and jumped in vain.
To Aphroditè then he told his woe:
'How can a thing so tiny hurt one so?'
She smiled and said; 'Why thou 'rt a tiny thing,
As is the bee; yet sorely thou canst sting.'

IDYLL XX.

Town and Country.

ONCE I would kiss Eunicè. "Back," quoth she,
And screamed and stormed; "a sorry clown kiss me?
Your country compliments, I like not such;
No lips but gentles' would I deign to touch.
Ne'er dream of kissing me: alike I shun
Your face, your language, and your tigerish fun.
How winning are your tones, how fine your air!
Your beard how silken and how sweet your hair!
Pah! you've a sick man's lips, a blackamoor's hand:
Your breath 's defilement. Leave me, I command."

Thrice spat she on her robe, and, muttering low,
Scanned me, with half-shut eyes, from top to toe:
Brought all her woman's witcheries into play,
Still smiling in a set sarcastic way,
Till my blood boiled, my visage crimson grew
With indignation, as a rose with dew:

And so she left me, inly to repine
That such as she could flout such charms as mine.

O shepherds, tell me true! Am I not fair?
Am I transformed? For lately I did wear
Grace as a garment; and my cheeks, o'er them
Ran the rich growth like ivy round the stem.
Like fern my tresses o'er my temples streamed;
O'er my dark eyebrows, white my forehead gleamed:
My eyes were of Athenè's radiant blue,
My mouth was milk, its accents honeydew.
Then I could sing—my tones were soft indeed!—
To pipe or flute or flageolet or reed:
And me did every maid that roams the fell
Kiss and call fair: not so this city belle.
She scorns the herdsman; knows not how divine
Bacchus ranged once the valleys with his kine;
How Cypris, maddened for a herdsman's sake,
Deigned upon Phrygia's mountains to partake
His cares: and wooed, and wept, Adonis in the brake.
What was Endymion, sweet Selenè's love?
A herdsman's lad. Yet came she from above,
Down to green Latmos, by his side to sleep.
And did not Rhea for a herdsman weep?
Didst not thou, Zeus, become a wandering bird,
To win the love of one who drove a herd?

Selenè, Cybelè, Cypris, all loved swains:
Eunicè, loftier-bred, their kiss disdains.
Henceforth, by hill or hall, thy love disown,
Cypris, and sleep the livelong night alone.

IDYLL XXI.

The Fishermen.

ASPHALION, A COMRADE.

WANT quickens wit: Want's pupils needs must work,
O Diophantus: for the child of toil
Is grudged his very sleep by carking cares:
Or, if he taste the blessedness of night,
Thought for the morrow soon warns slumber off.

Two ancient fishers once lay side by side
On piled-up sea-wrack in their wattled hut,
Its leafy wall their curtain. Near them lay
The weapons of their trade, basket and rod,
Hooks, weed-encumbered nets, and cords and oars,
And, propped on rollers, an infirm old boat.
Their pillow was a scanty mat, eked out
With caps and garments: such the ways and means,
Such the whole treasury of the fishermen.

They knew no luxuries: owned nor door nor dog;
Their craft their all, their mistress Poverty:
Their only neighbour Ocean, who for aye
Round their lorn hut came floating lazily.

Ere the moon's chariot was in mid-career,
The fishers girt them for their customed toil,
And banished slumber from unwilling eyes,
And roused their dreamy intellects with speech:—

ASPHALION.

"They say that soon flit summer-nights away,
Because all lingering is the summer day:
Friend, it is false; for dream on dream have I
Dreamed, and the dawn still reddens not the sky.
How? am I wandering? or does night pass slow?"

HIS COMRADE.

"Asphalion, scout not the sweet summer so.
'Tis not that wilful seasons have gone wrong,
But care maims slumber, and the nights seem long.

ASPHALION.

"Didst thou e'er study dreams? For visions fair
I saw last night; and fairly thou should'st share

The wealth I dream of, as the fish I catch.
Now, for sheer sense, I reckon few thy match;
And, for a vision, he whose motherwit
Is his sole tutor best interprets it.
And now we've time the matter to discuss:
For who could labour, lying here (like us)
Pillowed on leaves and neighboured by the deep,
Or sleeping amid thorns no easy sleep?
In rich men's halls the lamps are burning yet;
But fish come alway to the rich man's net."

COMRADE.

"To me the vision of the night relate;
Speak, and reveal the riddle to thy mate."

ASPHALION.

"Last evening, as I plied my watery trade,
(Not on an o'erfull stomach—we had made
Betimes a meagre meal, as you can vouch,)
I fell asleep; and lo! I seemed to crouch
Among the boulders, and for fish to wait,
Still dangling, rod in hand, my vagrant bait.
A fat fellow caught it: (e'en in sleep I'm bound
To dream of fishing, as of crusts the hound:)
Fast clung he to the hooks; his blood outwelled;

Bent with his struggling was the rod I held:
I tugged and tugged: my efforts made me ache:
'How, with a line thus slight, this monster take?'
Then gently, just to warn him he was caught,
I twitched him once; then slacked and then made taut
My line, for now he offered not to run;
A glance soon showed me all my task was done.
'Twas a gold fish, pure metal every inch
That I had captured. I began to flinch:
'What if this beauty be the sea-king's joy,
Or azure Amphitritè's treasured toy!'
With care I disengaged him—not to rip
With hasty hook the gilding from his lip:
And with a tow-line landed him, and swore
Never to set my foot on ocean more,
But with my gold live royally ashore.
So I awoke: and, comrade, lend me now
Thy wits, for I am troubled for my vow."

COMRADE.

"Ne'er quake: you're pledged to nothing, for no prize
You gained or gazed on. Dreams are nought but lies.

Yet may this dream bear fruit; if, wide-awake
And not in dreams, you'll fish the neighbouring lake.
Fish that are meat you'll there mayhap behold,
Not die of famine, amid dreams of gold."

IDYLL XXII.

The Sons of Leda.

THE pair I sing, that Ægis-armèd Zeus
Gave unto Leda; Castor and the dread
Of bruisers Polydeuces, whensoe'er
His harnessed hands were lifted for the fray.
Twice and again I sing the manly sons
Of Leda, those Twin Brethren, Sparta's own:
Who shield the soldier on the deadly scarp,
The horse wild-plunging o'er the crimson field,
The ship that, disregarding in her pride
Star-set and star-rise, meets disastrous gales:—
Such gales as pile the billows mountain-high,
E'en at their own wild will, round stem or stern:
Dash o'er the hold, the timbers rive in twain,
Till mast and tackle dangle in mid-air
Shivered like toys, and, as the night wears on,
The rain of heaven falls fast, and, lashed by wind
And iron hail, broad ocean rings again.
Then can they draw from out the nether abyss

Both craft and crew, each deeming he must die:
Lo the winds cease, and o'er the burnished deep
Comes stillness; this way flee the clouds and that;
And shine out clear the Great Bear and the Less,
And, 'twixt the Asses dimly seen, the Crib
Foretells fair voyage to the mariner.
O saviours, O companions of mankind,
Matchless on horse or harp, in lists or lay;
Which of ye twain demands my earliest song?
Of both I sing; of Polydeuces first.

Argo, escaped the two inrushing rocks,
And snow-clad Pontus with his baleful jaws,
Came to Bebrycia with her heaven-sprung freight;
There by one ladder disembarked a host
Of Heroes from the decks of Jason's ship.
On the low beach, to leeward of the cliff,
They leapt, and piled their beds, and lit their fires:
Castor meanwhile, the bridler of the steed,
And Polydeuces of the nut-brown face,
Had wandered from their mates; and, wildered both,
Searched through the boskage of the hill, and found
Hard by a slab of rock a bubbling spring
Brimful of purest water. In the depths
Below, like crystal or like silver gleamed
The pebbles: high above it pine and plane

And poplar rose, and cypress tipt with green;
With all rich flowers that throng the mead, when wanes
The Spring, sweet workshops of the furry bee.
There sat and sunned him one of giant bulk
And grisly mien: hard knocks had stov'n his ears:
Broad were his shoulders, vast his orbèd chest;
Like a wrought statue rose his iron frame:
And nigh the shoulder on each brawny arm
Stood out the muscles, huge as rolling stones
Caught by some rain-swoln river and shapen smooth
By its wild eddyings: and o'er nape and spine
Hung, balanced by the claws, a lion's skin.
Him Leda's conquering son accosted first:—

POLYDEUCES.

Luck to thee, friend unknown! Who own this shore?

AMYCUS.

Luck, quotha, to see men ne'er seen before!

POLYDEUCES.

Fear not, no base or base-born herd are we.

AMYCUS.

Nothing I fear, nor need learn this from thee.

POLYDEUCES.

What art thou? brutish churl, or o'erproud king?

AMYCUS.

E'en what thou see'st: and I am not trespassing.

POLYDEUCES.

Visit our land, take gifts from us, and go.

AMYCUS.

I seek naught from thee and can naught bestow.

POLYDEUCES.

Not e'en such grace as from yon spring to sip?

AMYCUS.

Try, if parch'd thirst sits languid on thy lip.

POLYDEUCES.

Can silver move thee? or if not, what can?

AMYCUS.

Stand up and fight me singly, man with man.

POLYDEUCES.

With fists? or fist and foot, eye covering eye?

AMYCUS.

Fall to with fists; and all thy cunning try.

POLYDEUCES.

This arm, these gauntlets, who shall dare withstand?

AMYCUS.

I: and "the Bruiser" lifts no woman's-hand.

POLYDEUCES.

Wilt thou, to crown our strife, some meed assign?

AMYCUS.

Thou shalt be called my master, or I thine.

POLYDEUCES.

By crimson-crested cocks such games are won.

AMYCUS.

Lions or cocks, we'll play this game or none.

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He spoke, and clutched a hollow shell, and blew
His clarion. Straightway to the shadowy pine
Clustering they came, as loud it pealed and long,
Bebrycia's bearded sons; and Castor too,

The peerless in the lists, went forth and called
From the Magnesian ship the Heroes all.

Then either warrior armed with coils of hide
His hands, and round his limbs bound ponderous bands,
And, breathing bloodshed, stept into the ring.
First there was much manœuvring, who should catch
The sunlight on his rear: but thou didst foil,
O Polydeuces, valour by address;
And full on Amycus' face the hot noon smote.
He in hot wrath strode forward, threatening war;
Straightway the Tyndarid smote him, as he closed,
Full on the chin: more furious waxed he still,
And, earthward bent, dealt blindly random blows.
Bebrycia shouted loud, the Greeks too cheered
Their champion: fearing lest in that scant space
This Tityus by sheer weight should bear him down.
But, shifting yet still there, the son of Zeus
Scored him with swift exchange of left and right,
And checked the onrush of the sea-god's child
Parlous albeit: till, reeling with his wounds,
He stood, and from his lips spat crimson blood.
Cheered yet again the princes, when they saw
The lips and jowl all seamed with piteous scars,
And the swoln visage and the half-closed eyes.
Still the prince teased him, feinting here or there

A thrust; and when he saw him helpless all,
Let drive beneath his eyelids at his nose,
And laid it bare to the bone. The stricken man
Measured his length supine amid the fern.
Keen was the fighting when he rose again,
Deadly the blows their sturdy gauntlets dealt.
But while Bebrycia's chieftain sparred round chest
And utmost shoulder, the resistless foe
Made his whole face one mass of hideous wounds.
While the one sweated all his bulk away,
And, late a giant, seemed a pigmy now,
The other's limbs waxed ever as he fought
In semblance and in size. But in what wise
The child of Zeus brought low that man of greed,
Tell, Muse, for thine is knowledge: I unfold
A secret not mine own; at thy behest
Speak or am dumb, nor speak but as thou wilt.

Amycus, athirst to do some doughty deed,
Stooping aslant from Polydeuces' lunge
Locked their left hands; and, stepping out, upheaved
From his right hip his ponderous other-arm.
And hit and harmed had been Amyclæ's king;
But, ducking low, he smote with one stout fist
The foe's left temple—fast the life-blood streamed
From the grim rift—and on his shoulder fell.

While with his left he reached the mouth, and made
The set teeth tingle; and, redoubling aye
His plashing blows, made havoc of his face
And crashed into his cheeks, till all abroad
He lay, and throwing up his arms disclaimed
The strife, for he was even at death's door.
No wrong the vanquished suffered at thy hands,
O Polydeuces; but he sware an oath,
Calling his sire Poseidon from the depths,
Ne'er to do violence to a stranger more.

Thy tale, O prince, is told. Now sing I thee,
Castor the Tyndarid, lord of rushing horse
And shaking javelin, corsleted in brass.

PART II.

The sons of Zeus had borne two maids away,
Leucippus' daughters. Straight in hot pursuit
Went the two brethren, sons of Aphareus,
Lynceus and Idas bold, their plighted lords.
And when the tomb of Aphareus was gained,
All leapt from out their cars, and front to front
Stood, with their ponderous spears and orbèd shields.
First Lynceus shouted loud from 'neath his helm:

"Whence, sirs, this lust for strife? Why, sword in hand,
Raise ye this coil about your neighbours' wives?
To us Leucippus these his daughters gave,
Long ere ye saw them: they are ours on oath.
Ye, coveting (to your shame) your neighbour's bed
And kine and asses and whate'er is his,
Suborned the man and stole our wives by bribes.
How often spake I thus before your face,
Yea I myself, though scant I am of phrase:
'Not thus, fair sirs, do honourable men
Seek to woo wives whose troth is given elsewhere.
Lo, broad is Sparta, broad the hunting-grounds
Of Elis: fleecy Arcady is broad,
And Argos and Messenè and the towns
To westward, and the long Sisyphian reach.
There 'neath her parents' roof dwells many a maid
Second to none in godliness or wit:
Wed of all these, and welcome, whom ye will,
For all men court the kinship of the brave;
And ye are as your sires, and they whose blood
Runs in your mother's veins, the flower of war.
Nay, sirs, but let us bring this thing to pass;
Then, taking counsel, choose meet brides for you.'
So I ran on; but o'er the shifting seas
The wind's breath blew my words, that found no grace

With you, for ye defied the charmer's voice.
Yet listen to me now if ne'er before:
Lo! we are kinsmen by the father's side.
But if ye lust for war, if strife must break
Forth among kin, and bloodshed quench our feud,
Bold Polydeuces then shall hold his hands
And his cousin Idas from the abhorrèd fray:
While I and Castor, the two younger-born,
Try war's arbitrement; so spare our sires
Sorrow exceeding. In one house one dead
Sufficeth: let the others glad their mates,
To the bride-chamber passing, not the grave,
And o'er yon maids sing jubilee. Well it were
At cost so small to lay so huge a strife."

He spoke—his words heaven gave not to the winds.
They, the two first-born, disarrayed and piled
Their arms, while Lynceus stept into the ring,
And at his shield's rim shook his stalwart spear.
And Castor likewise poised his quivering lance;
High waved the plume on either warrior's helm.
First each at other thrust with busy spear
Where'er he spied an inch of flesh exposed:
But lo! both spearpoints in their wicker shields
Lodged ere a blow was struck, and snapt in twain.

Then they unsheathed their swords, and framed new modes
Of slaughter: pause or respite there was none.
Oft Castor on broad shield and plumèd helm
Lit, and oft keen-eyed Lynceus pierced his shield,
Or grazed his crest of crimson. But anon,
As Lynceus aimed his blade at Castor's knee,
Back with the left sprang Castor and struck off
His fingers: from the maimed limb dropped the sword.
And, flying straightway, for his father's tomb
He made, where gallant Idas sat and saw
The battle of the brethren. But the child
Of Zeus rushed in, and with his broadsword drave
Through flank and navel, sundering with swift stroke
His vitals: Lynceus tottered and he fell,
And o'er his eyelids rushed the dreamless sleep.
Nor did their mother see her elder son
Come a fair bridegroom to his Cretan home.
For Idas wrenched from off the dead man's tomb
A jutting slab, to hurl it at the man
Who had slain his brother. Then did Zeus bring aid,
And struck the marble fabric from his grasp,
And with red lightning burned his frame to dust.
So doth he fight with odds who dares provoke
The Tyndarids, mighty sons of mighty sire.

Now farewell, Leda's children: prosper aye
The songs I sing. What minstrel loves not well
The Tyndarids, and Helen, and the chiefs
That trod Troy down for Meneläus' sake?
The bard of Chios wrought your royal deeds
Into his lays, who sang of Priam's state,
And fights 'neath Ilion's walls; of sailor Greeks,
And of Achilles towering in the strife.
Yet take from me whate'er of clear sweet song
The Muse accords me, even all my store!
The gods' most precious gift is minstrelsy.

IDYLL XXIII.

Love Avenged.

A LAD deep-dipt in passion pined for one
Whose mood was froward as her face was fair.
Lovers she loathed, for tenderness she had none:
Ne'er knew what Love was like, nor how he bare
A bow, and arrows to make young maids smart:
Proof to all speech, all access, seemed her heart.

So he found naught his furnace to allay;
No quiver of lips, no lighting of kind eyes,
Nor rose-flushed cheek; no talk, no lover's play
Was deigned him: but as forest-beasts are shy
Of hound and hunter, with this wight dealt she;
Fierce was her lip, her eyes gleamed ominously.

Her tyrant's-heart was imaged in her face,
That flushed, then altering put on blank disdain.
Yet, even then, her anger had its grace,
And made her lover fall in love again.

At last, unable to endure his flame,
To the fell threshold all in tears he came:

Kissed it, and lifted up his voice and said:
"O heart of stone, O curst and cruel maid
Unworthy of all love, by lions bred,
See, my last offering at thy feet is laid,
The halter that shall hang me! So no more
For my sake, lady, need thy heart be sore.

Whither thou doom'st me, thither must I fare.
There is a path, that whoso treads hath ease
(Men say) from love; Forgetfulness is there.
But if I drain that chalice to the lees,
I may not quench the love I have for you;
Now at your gates I cast my long adieu.

Your future I foresee. The rose is gay,
And passing-sweet the violet of the spring:
Yet time despoils them, and they soon decay.
The lily droops and dies, that lustrous thing;
The solid-seeming snowdrift melts full fast:
And maiden's bloom is rare, but may not last

The time shall come, when you shall feel as I;
And, with seared heart, weep many a bitter tear.

But, maiden, grant one farewell courtesy.
When you come forth, and see me hanging here,
E'en at your door, forget not my hard case;
But pause and weep me for a moment's space.

And drop one tear, and cut me down, and spread
O'er me some garment, for a funeral pall,
That wrapped thy limbs: and kiss me—let the dead
Be privileged thus highly—last of all.
You need not fear me: not if your disdain
Changed into fondness could I live again.

And scoop a grave, to hide my loves and me:
And thrice, at parting, say, 'My friend's no more:'
Add if you list, 'a faithful friend was he;'
And write this epitaph, scratched upon your door:
Stranger, Love slew him. Pass not by, until
Thou hast paused and said, 'His mistress used him ill.'"

This said, he grasped a stone: that ghastly stone
At the mid threshold 'neath the wall he laid,
And o'er the beam the light cord soon was thrown,
And his neck noosed. In air the body swayed,
Its footstool spurned away. Forth came once more
The maid, and saw him hanging at her door.

No struggle of heart it cost her, ne'er a tear
She wept o'er that young life, nor shunned to soil,
By contact with the corpse, her woman's-gear.
But on she went to watch the athletes' toil,
Then made for her loved haunt, the riverside:
And there she met the god she had defied.

For on a marble pedestal Eros stood
Fronting the pool: the statue leaped, and smote
And slew that miscreant. All the stream ran blood
And to the top a girl's cry seemed to float.
Rejoice, O lovers, since the scorner fell;
And, maids, be kind; for Love deals justice well.

IDYLL XXIV.

The Infant Heracles.

ALCMENA once had washed and given the breast
To Heracles, a babe of ten months old,
And Iphicles his junior by a night;
And cradled both within a brazen shield,
A gorgeous trophy, which Amphitryon erst
Had stript from Pterelaus fall'n in fight.
She stroked their baby brows, and thus she said:

"Sleep, children mine, a light luxurious sleep,
Brother with brother: sleep, my boys, my life:
Blest in your slumber, in your waking blest!"

She spake and rocked the shield; and in his arms
Sleep took them. But at midnight, when the Bear
Wheels to his setting, in Orion's front
Whose shoulder then beams broadest; Hera sent,
Mistress of wiles, two huge and hideous things,
Snakes with their scales of azure all on end,

To the broad portal of the chamber-door,
All to devour the infant Heracles.
They, all their length uncoiled upon the floor,
Writhed on to their blood-feast; a baleful light
Gleamed in their eyes, rank venom they spat forth.
But when with lambent tongues they neared the cot,
Alcmena's babes (for Zeus was watching all)
Woke, and throughout the chamber there was light.
Then Iphicles—so soon as he descried
The fell brutes peering o'er the hollow shield,
And saw their merciless fangs—cried lustily,
And kicked away his coverlet of down,
Fain to escape. But Heracles, he clung
Round them with warlike hands, in iron grasp
Prisoning the two: his clutch upon their throat,
The deadly snake's laboratory, where
He brews such poisons as e'en heaven abhors.
They twined and twisted round the babe that, born
After long travail, ne'er had shed a tear
E'en in his nursery; soon to quit their hold,
For powerless seemed their spines. Alcmena heard,
While her lord slept, the crying, and awoke.

"Amphitryon, up: chill fears take hold on me.
Up: stay not to put sandals on thy feet.
Hear'st thou our child, our younger, how he cries?

Seest thou yon walls illumed at dead of night,
But not by morn's pure beam? I know, I know,
Sweet lord, that some strange thing is happening here."

She spake; and he, upleaping at her call,
Made swiftly for the sword of quaint device
That aye hung dangling o'er his cedarn couch:
And he was reaching at his span-new belt,
The scabbard (one huge piece of lotus-wood)
Poised on his arm; when suddenly the night
Spread out her hands, and all was dark again.
Then cried he to his slaves, whose sleep was deep:
"Quick, slaves of mine; fetch fire from yonder hearth:
And force with all your strength the doorbolts back!
Up, loyal-hearted slaves: the master calls."

Forth came at once the slaves with lighted lamps.
The house was all astir with hurrying feet.
But when they saw the suckling Heracles
With the two brutes grasped firm in his soft hands,
They shouted with one voice. But he must show
The reptiles to Amphitryon; held aloft
His hands in childish glee, and laughed and laid
At his sire's feet the monsters still in death.

Then did Alcmena to her bosom take

The terror-blanched and passionate Iphicles:
Cradling the other in a lambswool quilt,
Her lord once more bethought him of his rest.

Now cocks had thrice sung out that night was o'er.
Then went Alcmena forth and told the thing
To Teiresias the seer, whose words were truth,
And bade him rede her what the end should be:—
'And if the gods bode mischief, hide it not,
Pitying, from me: man shall not thus avoid
The doom that Fate upon her distaff spins.
Son of Eueres, thou hast ears to hear.'

Thus spake the queen, and thus he made reply:
"Mother of monarchs, Perseus' child, take heart;
And look but on the fairer side of things.
For by the precious light that long ago
Left tenantless these eyes, I swear that oft
Achaia's maidens, as when eve is high
They mould the silken yarn upon their lap,
Shall tell Alcmena's story: blest art thou
Of women. Such a man in this thy son
Shall one day scale the star-encumbered heaven:
His amplitude of chest bespeaks him lord
Of all the forest beasts and all mankind.
Twelve tasks accomplished he must dwell with Zeus;

His flesh given over to Trachinian fires;
And son-in-law be hailed of those same gods
Who sent yon skulking brutes to slay thy babe.
Lo! the day cometh when the fawn shall couch
In the wolf's lair, nor fear the spiky teeth
That would not harm him. But, O lady, keep
Yon smouldering fire alive; prepare you piles
Of fuel, bramble-sprays or fern or furze
Or pear-boughs dried with swinging in the wind:
And let the kindled wild-wood burn those snakes
At midnight, when they looked to slay thy babe.
And let at dawn some handmaid gather up
The ashes of the fire, and diligently
Convey and cast each remnant o'er the stream
Faced by clov'n rocks, our boundary: then return
Nor look behind. And purify your home
First with sheer sulphur, rain upon it then,
(Chaplets of olive wound about your heads,)
Innocuous water, and the customed salt.
Lastly, to Zeus almighty slay a boar:
So shall ye vanquish all your enemies."

Spake Teiresias, and wheeling (though his years
Weighed on him sorely) gained his ivory car.
And Heracles as some young orchard-tree
Grew up, Amphitryon his reputed sire.

Old Linus taught him letters, Phœbus' child,
A dauntless toiler by the midnight lamp.
Each fall whereby the sons of Argos fell,
The flingers by cross-buttock, each his man
By feats of wrestling : all that boxers e'er,
Grim in their gauntlets, have devised, or they
Who wage mixed warfare and, adepts in art,
Upon the foe fall headlong : all such lore
Phocian Harpalicus gave him, Hermes' son :
Whom no man might behold while yet far off
And wait his armèd onset undismayed :
A brow so truculent roofed so stern a face.
To launch, and steer in safety round the goal,
Chariot and steed, and damage ne'er a wheel,
This the lad learned of fond Amphitryon's self.
Many a fair prize from listed warriors he
Had won on Argive racegrounds ; yet the car
Whereon he sat came still unshattered home,
What gaps were in his harness time had made.
Then with couched lance to reach the foe, his targe
Covering his rear, and bide the biting sword ;
Or, on the warpath, place his ambuscade,
Marshal his lines and rally his cavaliers ;
This knightly Castor learned him, erst exiled
From Argos, when her realms with all their wealth
Of vineyards fell to Tydeus, who received

Her and her chariots at Adrastus' hand.
Amongst the Heroes none was Castor's match
Till age had dimmed the glory of his youth.

Such tutors this fond mother gave her son.
The stripling's bed was at his father's side,
One after his own heart, a lion's skin.
His dinner, roast meat, with a loaf that filled
A Dorian basket, you might soothly say
Had satisfied a delver; and to close
The day he took, sans fire, a scanty meal.
A simple frock went halfway down his leg:

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IDYLL XXV.

Heracles the Lion Slayer.

* * * * *

TO whom thus spake the herdsman of the herd,
Pausing a moment from his handiwork:
"Friend, I will solve thy questions, for I fear
The angry looks of Hermes of the roads.
No dweller in the skies is wroth as he,
With him who saith the asking traveller nay.

"The flocks Augéas owns, our gracious lord,
One pasture pastures not, nor one fence bounds.
They wander, look you, some by Elissus' banks
Or god-beloved Alphéus' sacred stream,
Some by Buprasion, where the grape abounds,
Some here: their folds stand separate. But before
His herds, though they be myriad, yonder glades
That belt the broad lake round lie fresh and fair
For ever: for the low-lying meadows take
The dew, and teem with herbage honeysweet,

To lend new vigour to the hornèd kine.
Here on thy right their stalls thou canst descry
By the flowing river, for all eyes to see:
Here, where the platans blossom all the year,
And glimmers green the olive that enshrines
Rural Apollo, most august of gods.
Hard by, fair mansions have been reared for us
His herdsmen; us who guard with might and main
His riches that are more than tongue may tell:
Casting our seed o'er fallows thrice upturn'd
Or four times by the share; the bounds whereof
Well do the delvers know, whose busy feet
Troop to his wine-vats in fair summer-time.
Yea, all these acres wise Augéas owns,
These corn-clad uplands and these orchards green,
Far as yon ledges whence the cataracts leap.
Here do we haunt, here toil, as is the wont
Of labourers in the fields, the livelong day.
But prythee tell me thou—so shalt thou best
Serve thine own interests—wherefore art thou here?
Seeking Augéas, or mayhap some slave
That serves him? I can tell thee and I will
All thou would'st know: for of no churlish blood
Thou camest, nor wert nurtured as a churl:
That read I in thy stateliness of form;
The sons of heaven move thus among mankind."

Then answered him the warrior son of Zeus.
"Yea, veteran, I would see the Epéan King
Augéas; surely for this end I came.
If he bides there amongst his citizens,
Ruling the folk, determining the laws,
Look, father; bid some serf to be my guide,
Some honoured master-worker in the fields,
Who to shrewd questions shrewdly can reply.
Are not we made dependent each on each?"

To him the good old swain made answer thus:
"Stranger, some god hath timed thy visit here,
And given thee straightway all thy heart's desire.
Hither Augéas, offspring of the Sun,
Came, with young Phyleus splendid in his strength
But yesterday from the city, to review
(Not in one day) his multitudinous wealth,
Methinks e'en princes say within themselves,
'The safeguard of the flock's the master's eye.'
But haste, we'll seek him: to my own fold I
Will pilot thee; there haply find the King."

He said and went in front: but pondered much
(As he surveyed the lion-skin and the club,
Itself an armful) whence this stranger came;
And fain had asked. But fear recalled the words

That trembled on his lip, the fear to say
Aught that his fiery friend might take amiss.
For who can fathom all his fellow's mind?

The dogs perceived their coming, yet far off:
They scented flesh, they heard the thud of feet:
And with wild gallop, baying furiously,
Ran at Amphitryon's son: but feebly whined
And fawned upon the old man at his side.
Then Heracles, just lifting from the ground
A pebble, scared them home, and with hard words
Cursed the whole pack; and having stopped their din
(Inly rejoiced, nathless, to see them guard
So well an absent master's house) he spake:

"Lo! what a friend the royal gods have given
Man in the dog! A trusty servant he!
Had he withal an understanding heart,
To teach him when to rage and when forbear,
What brute could claim like praise? But, lacking wit,
'Tis but a passionate random-raving thing."

He spake: the dogs ran scurrying to their lairs.
And now the sun wheeled round his westering car
And led still evening on: from every field
Came thronging the fat flocks to bield and byre.

Then in their thousands, drove on drove, the kine
Came into view; as rainclouds, onward driven
By stress of gales, the west or mighty north,
Come up o'er all the heaven; and none may count
And naught may stay them as they sweep through air;
Such multitudes the storm's strength drives ahead,
Such multitudes climb surging in the rear—
So in swift sequence drove succeeded drove,
And all the champaign, all the highways swarmed
With tramping oxen; all the sumptuous leas
Rang with their lowing. Soon enough the stalls
Were populous with the laggard-footed kine,
Soon did the sheep lie folded in their folds.
Then of that legion none stood idle, none
Gaped listless at the herd, with naught to do:
But one drew near and milked them, binding clogs
Of wood with leathern thongs around their feet:
One brought, all hungering for the milk they loved,
The longing young ones to the longing dams.
One held the pail, one pressed the dainty cheese,
Or drove the bulls home, sundered from the kine.
Pacing from stall to stall, Augéas saw
What revenue his herdsman brought him in.
With him his son surveyed the royal wealth,
And, strong of limb and purpose, Heracles.
Then, though the heart within him was as steel,

Framed to withstand all shocks, Amphitryon's son
Gazed in amazement on those thronging kine;
For none had deemed or dreamed that one, or ten,
Whose wealth was more than regal, owned those tribes:
Such huge largess the Sun had given his child,
First of mankind for multitude of flocks.
The Sun himself gave increase day by day
To his child's herds: whate'er diseases spoil
The farmer, came not there; his kine increased
In multitude and value year by year:
None cast her young, or bare unfruitful males.
Three hundred bulls, white-pasterned, crumple-horned,
Ranged amid these, and eke two hundred roans,
Sires of a race to be: and twelve besides
Herded amongst them, sacred to the Sun.
Their skin was white as swansdown, and they moved
Like kings amid the beasts of laggard foot.
Scorning the herd in uttermost disdain
They cropped the green grass in untrodden fields:
And when from the dense jungle to the plain
Leapt a wild beast, in quest of vagrant cows;
Scenting him first, the twelve went forth to war.
Stern was their bellowing, in their eye sat death,
Foremost of all for mettle and for might
And pride of heart loomed Phaeton: him the swains
Regarded as a star; so bright he shone

Among the herd, the cynosure of eyes.
He, soon as he descried the sun-dried skin
Of the grim lion, made at Heracles
(Whose eye was on him)—fain to make his crest
And sturdy brow acquainted with his flanks.
Straight the prince grasped him with no tender grasp
By the left horn, and bowed that giant bulk
To earth, neck foremost: then, by pressure brought
To bear upon his shoulder, forced him back.
The web of muscles that enwraps the nerves
Stood out from the brute's fore-arm plain to see.
Marvelled the King, and Phyleus his brave son,
At the strange prowess of Amphitryon's child.

Then townwards, leaving straight that rich champaign,
Stout Heracles his comrade, Phyleus fared;
And soon as they had gained the paven road,
Making their way hotfooted o'er a path
(Not o'er-conspicuous in the dim green wood)
That left the farm and threaded through the vines,
Out-spake unto the child of Zeus most high,
Who followed in his steps, Augéas' son,
O'er his right shoulder glancing pleasantly.

"O stranger, as some old familiar tale

I seem to cast thy history in my mind.
For there came one to Argos, young and tall,
By birth a Greek from Helicè-on-seas,
Who told this tale before a multitude:
How that an Argive in his presence slew
A fearful lion-beast, the dread and death
Of herdsmen; which inhabited a den
Or cavern by the grove of Nemean Zeus.
He may have come from sacred Argos' self,
Or Tiryns, or Mycenæ: what know I?
But thus he told his tale, and said the slayer
Was (if my memory serves me) Perseus' son.
Methinks no islander had dared that deed
Save thee: the lion's skin that wraps thy ribs
Argues full well some gallant feat of arms.
But tell me, warrior, first—that I may know
If my prophetic soul speak truth or not—
Art thou the man of whom that stranger Greek
Spoke in my hearing? Have I guessed aright?
How slew you single-handed that fell beast?
How came it among rivered Nemea's glens?
For none such monster could the eagerest eye
Find in all Greece: Greece harbours bear and boar,
And deadly wolf: but not this larger game.
'Twas this that made his listeners marvel then:
They deemed he told them travellers' tales, to win
By random words applause from standers-by."

Then Phyleus from the mid-road edged away,
That both might walk abreast, and he might catch
More at his ease what fell from Heracles:
Who journeying now alongside thus began:—

"On the prior matter, O Augéas' child,
Thine own unaided wit hath ruled aright.
But all that monster's history, how it fell,
Fain would I tell thee who hast ears to hear,
Save only whence it came: for none of all
The Argive host could read that riddle right.
Some god, we dimly guessed, our niggard vows
Resenting, had upon Phoroneus' realm
Let loose this very scourge of humankind.
On peopled Pisa plunging like a flood
The brute ran riot: notably it cost
Its neighbours of Bembina woes untold.
And here Eurystheus bade me try my first
Passage of arms, and slay that fearsome thing.
So with my buxom bow and quiver lined
With arrows I set forth: my left hand held
My club, a beetling olive's stalwart trunk
And shapely, still environed in its bark:
This hand had torn from holiest Helicon
The tree entire, with all its fibrous roots.
And finding soon the lion's whereabouts,

I grasped my bow, and on the bent horn slipped
The string, and laid thereon the shaft of death.
And, now all eyes, I watched for that fell thing,
In hopes to view him ere he spied out me.
But midday came, and nowhere could I see
One footprint of the beast or hear his roar:
And, trust me, none appeared of whom to ask,
Herdsman or labourer, in the furrowed lea;
For wan dismay kept each man in his hut.
Still on I footed, searching through and through
The leafy mountain-passes, till I saw
The creature, and forthwith essayed my strength.
Gorged from some gory carcass, on he stalked
At eve towards his lair; his grizzled mane,
Shoulders, and grim glad visage, all adrip
With carnage; and he licked his bearded lips.
I, crouched among the shadows of the trees
On the green hill-top, waited his approach,
And as he came I aimed at his left flank.
The barbèd shaft sped idly, nor could pierce
The flesh, but glancing dropped on the green grass.
He, wondering, raised forthwith his tawny head,
And ran his eyes o'er all the vicinage,
And snarled and gave to view his cavernous throat.
Meanwhile I levelled yet another shaft,
Ill pleased to think my first had fled in vain.

In the mid-chest I smote him, where the lungs
Are seated: still the arrow sank not in,
But fell, its errand frustrate, at his feet.
Once more was I preparing, sore chagrined,
To draw the bowstring, when the ravenous beast
Glaring around espied me, lashed his sides
With his huge tail, and opened war at once.
Swelled his vast neck, his dun locks stood on end
With rage: his spine moved sinuous as a bow,
Till all his weight hung poised on flank and loin.
And e'en as, when a chariot-builder bends
With practised skill his shafts of splintered fig,
Hot from the fire, to be his axle-wheels;
Flies the tough-rinded sapling from the hands
That shape it, at a bound recoiling far:
So from far-off the dread beast, all of a heap,
Sprang on me, hungering for my life-blood. I
Thrust with one hand my arrows in his face
And my doffed doublet, while the other raised
My seasoned cudgel o'er his crest, and drave
Full at his temples, breaking clean in twain
On the fourfooted warrior's airy scalp
My club; and ere he reached me, down he fell.
Headlong he fell, and poised on tremulous feet
Stood, his head wagging, and his eyes grown dim
For the shrewd stroke had shattered brain and bone.

I, marking him beside himself with pain,
Fell, ere recovering he should breathe again,
At vantage on his solid sinewy neck,
My bow and woven quiver thrown aside.
With iron clasp I gripped him from the rear
(His talons else had torn me) and, my foot
Set on him, forced to earth by dint of heel
His hinder parts, my flanks entrenched the while
Behind his fore-arm; till his thews were stretched
And strained, and on his haunches stark he stood
And lifeless; hell received his monstrous ghost.
Then with myself I counselled how to strip
From off the dead beast's limbs his shaggy hide,
A task full onerous, since I found it proof
Against all blows of steel or stone or wood.
Some god at last inspired me with the thought,
With his own claws to rend the lion's skin.
With these I flayed him soon, and sheathed and armed
My limbs against the shocks of murderous war.
Thus, sir, the Nemean lion met his end,
Erewhile the constant curse of beast and man."

IDYLL XXVI.

The Bacchanals.

AGAVÈ of the vermeil-tinted cheek
And Ino and Autonoä marshalled erst
Three bands of revellers under one hill-peak.
They plucked the wild-oak's matted foliage first,
Lush ivy then, and creeping asphodel;
And reared therewith twelve shrines amid the untrodden fell:

To Semelè three, to Dionysus nine.
Next, from a vase drew offerings subtly wrought,
And prayed and placed them on each fresh green shrine;
So by the god, who loved such tribute, taught.
Perched on the sheer cliff, Pentheus could espy
All, in a mastick hoar ensconced that grew thereby.

Autonoä marked him, and with frightful cries
Flew to make havoc of those mysteries weird
That must not be profaned by vulgar eyes.
Her frenzy frenzied all. Then Pentheus feared
And fled: and in his wake those damsels three,
Each with her trailing robe up-gathered to the knee.

"What will ye, dames," quoth Pentheus. "Thou shalt guess
At what we mean, untold," Autonoä said.
Agavè moaned—so moans a lioness
Over her young one—as she clutched his head:
While Ino on the carcass fairly laid
Her heel, and wrenched away shoulder and shoulder-blade.

Autonoä's turn came next: and what remained
Of flesh their damsels did among them share,
And back to Thebes they came all carnage-stained,
And planted not a king but aching there.
Warned by this tale, let no man dare defy
Great Bacchus; lest a death more awful he should die,

And when he counts nine years or scarcely ten,
Rush to his ruin. May I pass my days

Uprightly, and be loved of upright men!
And take this motto, all who covet praise:
('Twas Ægis-bearing Zeus that spake it first:)
'The godly seed fares well: the wicked's is accurst.'

Now bless ye Bacchus, whom on mountain snows,
Prisoned in his thigh till then, the Almighty laid.
And bless ye fairfaced Semelè, and those
Her sisters, hymned of many a hero-maid,
Who wrought, by Bacchus fired, a deed which none
May gainsay—who shall blame that which a god hath done?

IDYLL XXVII.

A Countryman's Wooing.

DAPHNIS. A MAIDEN.

THE MAIDEN.

HOW fell sage Helen? through a swain like thee.

DAPHNIS.

Nay the true Helen's just now kissing me.

THE MAIDEN.

Satyr, ne'er boast: 'what's idler than a kiss?'

DAPHNIS.

Yet in such pleasant idling there is bliss.

THE MAIDEN.

I'll wash my mouth: where go thy kisses then?

DAPHNIS.

Wash, and return it—to be kissed again.

THE MAIDEN.

Go kiss your oxen, and not unwed maids.

DAPHNIS.

Ne'er boast; for beauty is a dream that fades.

THE MAIDEN.

Past grapes are grapes: dead roses keep their smell.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon olives: I have a tale to tell.

THE MAIDEN.

Not I: you fooled me with smooth words before.

DAPHNIS.

Come to yon elms, and hear me pipe once more.

THE MAIDEN.

Pipe to yourself: your piping makes me cry.

DAPHNIS.

A maid, and flout the Paphian? Fie, oh fie!

THE MAIDEN.

She's naught to me, if Artemis' favour last.

DAPHNIS.

Hush, ere she smite you and entrap you fast.

THE MAIDEN.

And let her smite me, trap me as she will!

DAPHNIS.

Your Artemis shall be your saviour still?

THE MAIDEN.

Unhand me! What, again? I'll tear your lip.

DAPHNIS.

Can you, could damsel e'er, give Love the slip?

THE MAIDEN.

You are his bondslave, but not I by Pan!

DAPHNIS.

I doubt he'll give thee to a worser man.

THE MAIDEN.

Many have wooed me, but I fancied none.

DAPHNIS.

Till among many came the destined *one*.

THE MAIDEN.

Wedlock is woe. Dear lad, what can I do?

DAPHNIS.

Woe it is not, but joy and dancing too.

THE MAIDEN.

Wives dread their husbands: so I've heard it said.

DAPHNIS.

Nay, they rule o'er them. What does woman dread?

THE MAIDEN.

Then children—Eilcithya's dart is keen.

DAPHNIS.

But the deliverer, Artemis, is your queen.

THE MAIDEN.

And bearing children all our grace destroys.

DAPHNIS.

Bear them and shine more lustrous in your boys.

THE MAIDEN.

Should I say yea, what dower awaits me then?

DAPHNIS.

Thine are my cattle, thine this glade and glen.

THE MAIDEN.

Swear not to wed, then leave me in my woe?

DAPHNIS.

Not I by Pan, though thou should'st bid me go.

THE MAIDEN.

And shall a cot be mine, with farm and fold!

DAPHNIS.

Thy cot's half-built, fair wethers range this wold.

THE MAIDEN.

What, what to my old father must I say?

DAPHNIS.

Soon as he hears my name he'll not say nay.

THE MAIDEN.

Speak it: by e'en a name we're oft beguiled.

DAPHNIS.

I'm Daphnis, Lycid's and Nomæa's child.

THE MAIDEN.

Well-born indeed: and not less so am I.

DAPHNIS.

I know—Menalcas' daughter may look high.

THE MAIDEN.

That grove, where stands your sheepfold, shew me please.

DAPHNIS.

Nay look, how green, how tall my cypress-trees.

THE MAIDEN.

Graze, goats: I go to learn the herdsman's trade.

DAPHNIS.

Feed, bulls: I shew my copses to my maid.

THE MAIDEN.

Satyr, what mean you? You presume o'ermuch.

DAPHNIS.

This waist is round, and pleasant to the touch.

THE MAIDEN.

By Pan, I'm like to swoon! Unhand me pray!

DAPHNIS.

Why be so timorous? Pretty coward, stay.

THE MAIDEN.

This bank is wet: you've soiled my pretty gown.

DAPHNIS.

See, a soft fleece to guard it I put down.

THE MAIDEN.

And you've purloined my sash. What can this mean?

DAPHNIS.

This sash I'll offer to the Paphian queen.

THE MAIDEN.

Stay, miscreant—some one comes—I heard a noise.

DAPHNIS.

'Tis but the green trees whispering of our joys.

THE MAIDEN.

You've torn my plaidie, and I am half unclad.

DAPHNIS.

Anon I'll give thee a yet ampler plaid.

THE MAIDEN.

Generous just now, you'll one day grudge me bread.

DAPHNIS.

Ah! for thy sake my life-blood I could shed.

THE MAIDEN.

Artemis, forgive! Thy eremite breaks her vow.

DAPHNIS.

Love, and Love's mother, claim a calf and cow.

THE MAIDEN.

A woman I depart, my girlhood o'er.

DAPHNIS.

Be wife, be mother; but a girl no more.

Thus interchanging whispered talk the pair,
Their faces all aglow, long lingered there.
At length the hour arrived when they must part.
With downcast eyes, but sunshine in her heart,
She went to tend her flock; while Daphnis ran
Back to his herded bulls, a happy man.

IDYLL XXVIII.

The Distaff.

DISTAFF, blithely whirling distaff, azure-eyed Athena's gift
To the sex the aim and object of whose lives is household thrift,
Seek with me the gorgeous city raised by Neilus, where a plain
Roof of pale-green rush o'er-arches Aphroditè's hallowed fane.
Thither ask I Zeus to waft me, fain to see my old friend's face,
Nicias, o'er whose birth presided every passion-breathing Grace;
Fain to meet his answering welcome; and anon deposit thee
In his lady's hands, thou marvel of laborious ivory.
Many a manly robe ye'll fashion, much translucent maiden's gear;

Nay, should e'er the fleecy mothers twice within the selfsame year
Yield their wool in yonder pasture, Theugenis of the dainty feet
Would perform the double labour: matron's cares to her are sweet.
To an idler or a trifler I had verily been loth
To resign thee, O my distaff, for the same land bred us both:
In the land Corinthian Archias built aforetime, thou hadst birth,
In our island's core and marrow, whence have sprung the kings of earth:
To the home I now transfer thee of a man who knows full well
Every craft whereby men's bodies dire diseases may repel:
There to live in sweet Miletus. Lady of the Distaff she
Shall be named, and oft reminded of her poet-friend by thee:
Men shall look on thee and murmur to each other, 'Lo! how small
Was the gift, and yet how precious! Friendship's gifts are priceless all.'

IDYLL XXIX.

Loves.

'SINCERITY comes with the wine-cup,' my dear:
Then now o'er our wine-cups let us be sincere.
My soul's treasured secret to you I'll impart;
It is this; that I never won fairly your heart.
One half of my life, I am conscious, has flown;
The residue lives on your image alone.
You are kind, and I dream I'm in paradise then;
You are angry, and lo! all is darkness again.
It is right to torment one who loves you? Obey
Your elder; 'twere best; and you'll thank me one day.
Settle down in one nest on one tree (taking care
That no cruel reptile can clamber up there);
As it is with your lovers you're fairly perplext;
One day you choose one bough, another the next.
Whoe'er at all struck by your graces appears,
Is more to you straight than the comrade of years;
While he's like the friend of a day put aside;

For the breath of your nostrils, I think, is your pride.
Form a friendship, for life, with some likely young lad;
So doing, in honour your name shall be had.
Nor would Love use you hardly; though lightly can he
Bind strong men in chains, and has wrought upon me
Till the steel is as wax—but I'm longing to press
That exquisite mouth with a clinging caress.

No? Reflect that you're older each year than the last;
That we all must grow gray, and the wrinkles come fast.
Reflect, ere you spurn me, that youth at his sides
Wears wings; and once gone, all pursuit he derides:
Nor are men over keen to catch charms as they fly.
Think of this and be gentle, be loving as I:
When your years are maturer, we two shall be then
The pair in the Iliad over again.
But if you consign all my words to the wind
And say, 'Why annoy me? you're not to my mind,'
I—who lately in quest of the Gold Fruit had sped
For your sake, or of Cerberus guard of the dead—
Though you called me, would ne'er stir a foot from my door,
For my love and my sorrow thenceforth will be o'er.

IDYLL XXX.

The Death of Adonis.

CYTHERA saw Adonis
And knew that he was dead;
She marked the brow, all grisly now,
The cheek no longer red;
And "Bring the boar before me"
Unto her Loves she said.

Forthwith her winged attendants
Ranged all the woodland o'er,
And found and bound in fetters
Threefold the grisly boar:
One dragged him at a rope's end
E'en as a vanquished foe;
One went behind and drave him
And smote him with his bow:
On paced the creature feebly;
He feared Cythera so.

To him said Aphroditè:
"So, worst of beasts, 'twas you
Who rent that thigh asunder,
Who him that loved me slew?"
And thus the beast made answer:
"Cythera, hear me swear
By thee, by him that loved thee,
And by these bonds I wear,
And them before whose hounds I ran—
I meant no mischief to the man
Who seemed to thee so fair.

"As on a carven statue
Men gaze, I gazed on him;
I seemed on fire with mad desire
To kiss that offered limb:
My ruin, Aphroditè,
Thus followed from my whim.

"Now therefore take and punish
And fairly cut away
These all unruly tusks of mine;
For to what end serve they?
And if thine indignation
Be not content with this,

Cut off the mouth that ventured
To offer him a kiss"—

But Aphroditè pitied
And bade them loose his chain.
The boar from that day forward
Still followed in her train;
Nor ever to the wildwood
Attempted to return,
But in the focus of Desire
Preferred to burn and burn.

IDYLL XXXI.

Loves.

AH for this the most accursed, unendurable of ills!
Nigh two months a fevered fancy for a maid my bosom fills.
Fair she is, as other damsels: but for what the simplest swain
Claims from the demurest maiden, I must sue and sue in vain.
Yet doth now this thing of evil my longsuffering heart beguile,
Though the utmost she vouchsafes me is the shadow of a smile:
And I soon shall know no respite, have no solace e'en in sleep.
Yesterday I watched her pass me, and from down-dropt eyelids peep
At the face she dared not gaze on—every moment blushing more—
And my love took hold upon me as it never took before.

Home I went a wounded creature, with a gnawing at my heart;
And unto the soul within me did my bitterness impart.

"Soul, why deal with me in this wise? Shall thy folly know no bound?
Canst thou look upon these temples, with their locks of silver crowned,
And still deem thee young and shapely? Nay, my soul, let us be sage;
Act as they that have already sipped the wisdom-cup of age.
Men have loved and have forgotten. Happiest of all is he
To the lover's woes a stranger, from the lover's fetters free:
Lightly his existence passes, as a wild-deer fleeting fast:
Tamed, it may be, he shall voyage in a maiden's wake at last:
Still to-day 'tis his to revel with his mates in boyhood's flowers.
As to thee, thy brain and marrow passion evermore devours,
Prey to memories that haunt thee e'en in visions of the night;

And a year shall scarcely pluck thee from thy miserable
plight."

Such and divers such reproaches did I heap upon my
soul.
And my soul in turn made answer:—"Whoso deems
he can control
Wily love, the same shall lightly gaze upon the stars
of heaven
And declare by what their number overpasses seven
times seven.
Will I, nill I, I may never from my neck his yoke un
loose.
So, my friend, a god hath willed it: he whose plot
could outwit Zeus,
And the queen whose home is Cyprus. I, a leaflet o
to-day,
I whose breath is in my nostrils, am I wrong to ow
his sway?"

FRAGMENT FROM THE "BERENICE."

YE that would fain net fish and wealth withal,
For bare existence harrowing yonder mere,
To this our Lady slay at even-fall
That holy fish, which, since it hath no peer
For gloss and sheen, the dwellers about here
Have named the Silver Fish. This done, let down
Your nets, and draw them up, and never fear
To find them empty* * * *

EPIGRAMS AND EPITAPHS.

I.

YOURS be yon dew-steep'd roses, yours be yon
Thick-clustering ivy, maids of Helicon:
Thine, Pythian Pæan, that dark-foliaged bay;
With such thy Delphian crags thy front array.
This horn'd and shaggy ram shall stain thy shrine,
Who crops e'en now the feathering turpentine.

II.

TO Pan doth white-limbed Daphnis offer here
(He once piped sweetly on his herdsman's flute)
His reeds of many a stop, his barbèd spear,
And scrip, wherein he held his hoards of fruit.

III.

DAPHNIS, thou slumberest on the leaf-strown lea
Thy frame at rest, thy springes newly sprea
O'er the fell-side. But two are hunting thee:
Pan, and Priapus with his fair young head
Hung with wan ivy. See! they come, they leap
Into thy lair—fly, fly,—shake off the coil of sleep!

IV.

FOR yon oaken avenue, swain, you must steer,
Where a statue of figwood, you'll see, has been set:
It has never been barked, has three legs and no ear;
But I think there is life in the patriarch yet.
He is handsomely shrined within fair chapel-walls;
Where, fringed with sweet cypress and myrtle and bay,
A stream ever-fresh from the rock's hollow falls,
And the ringleted vine her ripe store doth display:
And the blackbirds, those shrill-piping songsters of spring,
Wake the echoes with wild inarticulate song:
And the notes of the nightingale plaintively ring,
As she pours from her dun throat her lay sweet and strong.
Sitting there, to Priapus, the gracious one, pray
That the lore he has taught me I soon may unlearn:
Say I'll give him a kid, and in case he says nay
To this offer, three victims to him will I burn;
A kid, a fleeced ram, and a lamb sleek and fat;
He will listen, mayhap, to my prayers upon that.

V.

PRYTHEE, sing something sweet to me—you that can play
First and second at once. Then I too will essay
To croak on the pipes: and yon lad shall salute
Our ears with a melody breathed through his flute.
In the cave by the green oak our watch we will keep,
And goatish old Pan we'll defraud of his sleep.

VI.

POOR Thyrsis! What boots it to weep out thine eyes?
Thy kid was a fair one, I own:
But the wolf with his cruel claw made her his prize,
And to darkness her spirit hath flown.
Do the dogs cry? What boots it? In spite of their cries
There is left of her never a bone.

VII.

For a Statue of Aesculapius.

FAR as Miletus travelled Pæan's son;
There to be guest of Nicias, guest of one
Who heals all sickness; and who still reveres
Him, for his sake this cedarn image rears.
The sculptor's hand right well did Nicias fill;
And here the sculptor lavished all his skill.

VIII.

Ortho's Epitaph.

FRIEND, Ortho of Syracuse gives thee this charge:
Never venture out, drunk, on a wild winter's night.
I did so and died. My possessions were large;
Yet the turf that I'm clad with is strange to me quite.

IX.

Epitaph of Cleonicus.

MAN, husband existence: ne'er launch on the sea
Out of season: our tenure of life is but frail.
Think of poor Cleonicus: for Phasos sailed he
From the valleys of Syria, with many a bale:
With many a bale, ocean's tides he would stem
When the Pleiads were sinking; and he sank with them.

X.

For a Statue of the Muses.

TO you this marble statue, maids divine,
Xenocles raised, one tribute unto nine.
Your votary all admit him: by this skill
He gat him fame: and you he honours still.

XI.

Epitaph of Eusthenes.

HERE the shrewd physiognomist Eusthenes lies,
Who could tell all your thoughts by a glance at your eyes.
A stranger, with strangers his honoured bones rest;
They valued sweet song, and he gave them his best.
All the honours of death doth the poet possess:
If a small one, they mourned for him nevertheless.

XII.

For a Tripod Erected by Damoteles to Bacchus.

THE precentor Damoteles, Bacchus, exalts
Your tripod, and, sweetest of deities, you.
He was champion of men, if his boyhood had faults;
And he ever loved honour and seemliness too.

XIII.

For a Statue of Anacreon.

THIS statue, stranger, scan with earnest gaze;
And, home returning, say "I have beheld
Anacreon, in Teos; him whose lays
Were all unmatched among our sires of eld."
Say further: "Youth and beauty pleased him best;"
And all the man will fairly stand exprest.

XIV.

Epitaph of Eurymedon.

THOU hast gone to the grave, and abandoned thy son
Yet a babe, thy own manhood but scarcely begun.
Thou art throned among gods: and thy country will take
Thy child to her heart, for his brave father's sake.

XV.

Another.

PROVE, traveller, now, that you honour the brave
Above the poltroon, when he's laid in the grave,
By murmuring 'Peace to Eurymedon dead.'
The turf should lie light on so sacred a head.

XVI.

For a Statue of the Heavenly Aphrodite.

APHRODITE stands here; she of heavenly birth;
Not that base one who's wooed by the children of earth.
'Tis a goddess; bow down. And one blemishless all,
Chrysogonè, placed her in Amphicles' hall:
Chrysogonè's heart, as her children, was his,
And each year they knew better what happiness is.
For, Queen, at life's outset they made thee their friend;
Religion is policy too in the end.

XVII.

To Epicharmus.

READ these lines to Epicharmus. They are Dorian, as was he
The sire of Comedy.
Of his proper self bereavèd, Bacchus, unto thee we rear
His brazen image here;
We in Syracuse who sojourn, elsewhere born. Thus much we can
Do for our countryman,
Mindful of the debt we owe him. For, possessing ample store
Of legendary lore,
Many a wholesome word, to pilot youths and maids thro' life, he spake:
We honour him for their sake.

XVIII.

Epitaph of Cleita, Nurse of Medeius.

THE babe Medeius to his Thracian nurse
This stone—inscribed *To Cleita*—reared in the midhighway.
Her modest virtues oft shall men rehearse;
Who doubts it? is not 'Cleita's worth' a proverb to this day?

XIX.

To Archilochus.

PAUSE, and scan well Archilochus, the bard of elder days,
By east and west
Alike's confest
The mighty lyrist's praise.
Delian Apollo loved him well, and well the sister-choir:
His songs were fraught
With subtle thought,
And matchless was his lyre.

XX.

Under a Statue of Peisander,

WHO WROTE THE LABOURS OF HERACLES.

HE whom ye gaze on was the first
That in quaint song the deeds rehearsed
Of him whose arm was swift to smite,
Who dared the lion to the fight:
That tale, so strange, so manifold,
Peisander of Cameirus told.
For this good work, thou may'st be sure,
His country placed him here,
In solid brass that shall endure
Through many a month and year.

XXI.

Epitaph of Hipponax.

BEHOLD Hipponax' burialplace,
A true bard's grave.
Approach it not, if you're a base
And base-born knave.
But if your sires were honest men
And unblamed you,
Sit down thereon serenely then,
And eke sleep too.

Tuneful Hipponax rests him here.
Let no base rascal venture near.
Ye who rank high in birth and mind
Sit down—and sleep, if so inclined.

XXII.

On his own Book.

NOT my namesake of Chios, but I, who belong
To the Syracuse burghers, have sung you my song.
I'm Praxagoras' son by Philinna the fair,
And I never asked praise that was owing elsewhere.

VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES.

VIRGIL'S ECLOGUES.

ECLOGUE I.

MELIBŒUS. TITYRUS.

M.

STRETCHED in the shadow of the broad beech, thou
Rehearsest, Tityrus, on the slender pipe
Thy woodland music. We our fatherland
Are leaving, we must shun the fields we love:
While, Tityrus, thou, at ease amid the shade,
Bidd'st answering woods call Amaryllis 'fair.'

T. O Melibœus! 'Tis a god that made
For me this holiday: for god I'll aye
Account him; many a young lamb from my fold
Shall stain his altar. Thanks to him, my kine
Range, as thou seest them: thanks to him, I play
What songs I list upon my shepherd's pipe.

M. For me, I grudge thee not; I marvel much:
So sore a trouble is in all the land.
Lo! feeble *I* am driving hence my goats—

Nay *dragging*, Tityrus, one, and that with pain.
For, yeaning here amidst the hazel-stems,
She left her twin kids—on the naked flint
She left them; and I lost my promised flock.
This evil, I remember, oftentimes,
(Had not my wits been wandering,) oaks foretold
By heaven's hand smitten: oft the wicked crow
Croaked the same message from the rifted holm.
—Yet tell me, Tityrus, of this 'God' of thine.

T. The city men call *Rome* my folly deemed
Was e'en like this of ours, where week by week
We shepherds journey with our weanling flocks.
So whelp to dog, so kid (I knew) to dam
Was likest: and I judged great things by small.
But o'er all cities this so lifts her head,
As doth o'er osiers lithe the cypress tree.

M. What made thee then so keen to look on Rome?

T. Freedom: who marked, at last, my helpless state:
Now that a whiter beard than that of yore
Fell from my razor: still she marked, and came
(All late) to help me—now that all my thought
Is Amaryllis, Galatea gone.

While Galatea's, I despaired, I own,
Of freedom, and of thrift. Though from my farm
Full many a victim stept, though rich the cheese
Pressed for yon thankless city: still my hand
Returned not, heavy with brass pieces, home.

M. I wondered, Amaryllis, whence that woe,
And those appeals to heav'n: for whom the peach
Hung undisturbed upon the parent tree
Tityrus was gone! Why, Tityrus, pine and rill,
And all these copses, cried to thee, "Come home!"

T. What could I do? I could not step from out
My bonds; nor meet, save there, with Pow'rs so kind.
There, Melibœus, I beheld that youth
For whom each year twelve days my altars smoke.
Thus answered he my yet unanswered prayer;
"Feed still, my lads, your kine, and yoke your bulls."

M. Happy old man! Thy lands are yet thine own!
Lands broad enough for thee, although bare stones
And marsh choke every field with reedy mud.

Strange pastures shall not vex thy teeming ewes,
Nor neighbouring flocks shed o'er them rank disease.
Happy old man! Here, by familiar streams
And holy springs, thou'lt catch the leafy cool. 60
Here, as of old, yon hedge, thy boundary line,
Its willow-buds a feast for Hybla's bees,
Shall with soft whisperings woo thee to thy sleep.
Here, 'neath the tall cliff, shall the vintager
Sing carols to the winds: while all the time
Thy pets, the stockdoves, and the turtles make
Incessantly their moan from aëry elms.

T. Aye, and for this shall slim stags graze in air,
And ocean cast on shore the shrinking fish;
For this, each realm by either wandered o'er,
Parthians shall Arar drink, or Tigris Gauls;
Ere from this memory shall fade that face! 72

M. And we the while must thirst on Libya's sands,
O'er Scythia roam, and where the Cretan stems
The swift Oaxes; or, with Britons, live
Shut out from all the world. Shall I e'er see,
In far-off years, my fatherland? the turf
That roofs my meagre hut? see, wondering last,
Those few scant cornblades that are realms to me?

What! must rude soldiers hold these tallows trim?
That corn barbarians? See what comes of strife,
Poor people—where we sowed, what hands shall reap!
Now, Melibœus, pr'ythee graft thy pears,
And range thy vines! Nay on, my she-goats, on,
Once happy flock! For never more must I,
Outstretched in some green hollow, watch you hang
From tufted crags, far up: no carols more
I'll sing: nor, shepherded by me, shall ye
Crop the tart willow and the clover-bloom.

T. Yet here, this one night, thou may'st rest with me,
Thy bed green branches. Chestnuts soft have I
And mealy apples, and our fill of cheese.
Already, see, the far-off chimneys smoke,
And deeper grow the shadows of the hills.

ECLOGUE II.

Corydon.

FOR one fair face—his master's idol—burned
The shepherd Corydon; and hope had none.
Day after day he came ('twas all he could)

Where, piles of shadow, thick the beeches rose:
There, all alone, his unwrought phrases flung,
Bootless as passionate, to copse and crag.
"Hardhearted! Naught car'st thou for all my songs,
Naught pitiest. I shall die, one day, for thee.
The very cattle court cool shadows now,
Now the green lizard hides beneath the thorn:
And for the reaper, faint with driving heat,
The handmaids mix the garlic-salad strong.
My only mates, the crickets—as I track
'Neath the fierce sun thy steps—make shrill the woods.
Better to endure the passion and the pride
Of Amaryllis: better to endure
Menalcas—dark albeit as thou art fair.
Put not, oh fair, in difference of hue
Faith overmuch: the white May-blossoms drop
And die; the hyacinth swart, men gather it.
Thy scorn am I: thou ask'st not whence I am,
How rich in snowy flocks, how stored with milk.
O'er Sicily's green hills a thousand lambs
Wander, all mine: my new milk fails me not
In summer or in snow. Then I can sing
All songs Amphion the Dircæan sang,
Piping his flocks from Attic Aracynth.
Nor am I all uncouth. For yesterday,

When winds had laid the seas, I, from the shore,
Beheld my image. Little need I fear
Daphnis, though thou wert judge, or mirrors lie.
—Oh! be content to haunt ungentle fields,
A cottager, with me; bring down the stag,
And with green switch drive home thy flocks of kids:
Like mine, thy woodland songs shall rival Pan's!
—'Twas Pan first taught us reed on reed to fit
With wax: Pan watches herd and herdsman too.
—Nor blush that reeds should chafe thy pretty lip.
What pains Amyntas took, this skill to gain!
I have a pipe—seven stalks of different lengths
Compose it—which Damœtas gave me once.
Dying he said, "At last 'tis all thine own."
The fool Amyntas heard, and grudged, the praise.
Two fawns moreover (perilous was the gorge
Down which I tracked them!)—dappled still each skin—
Drain daily two ewe-udders; all for thee.
Long Thestylis has cried to make them hers.
Hers be they—since to thee my gifts are dross.

Be mine, oh fairest! See! for thee the Nymphs
Bear baskets lily-laden: Naiads bright
For thee crop poppy-crests and violets pale,
With daffodil and fragrant fennel-bloom:
Then, weaving casia in and all sweet things,

Soft hyacinth paint with yellow marigold.
Apples *I'll* bring thee, hoar with tender bloom,
And chestnuts—which my Amaryllis loved,
And waxen plums: let plums too have their day.
And thee I'll pluck, oh bay, and, myrtle, thee
Its neighbour: neighboured thus your sweets shall mix.
—Pooh! Thou 'rt a yokel, Corydon. Thy love
Laughs at thy gifts: if gifts must win the day,
Rich is Iolas. What thing have I,
Poor I, been asking—while the winds and boars
Ran riot in my pools and o'er my flowers?

—Yet, fool, whom fliest thou? Gods have dwelt in woods,
And Dardan Paris. Citadels let her
Who built them, Pallas, haunt: green woods for me.
Grim lions hunt the wolf, and wolves the kid,
And kids at play the clover-bloom. I hunt
Thee only: each one drawn to what he loves.
See! trailing from their necks the kine bring home
The plough, and, as he sinks, the sun draws out
To twice their length the shadows. Still I burn
With love. For what can end or alter love?

Thou 'rt raving, simply raving, Corydon.
Clings to thy leafy elm thy half-pruned vine.

Why not begin, at least, to plait with twigs
And limber reeds some useful homely thing?
Thou 'lt find another love, if scorned by this.

ECLOGUE III.

MENALCAS. DAMŒTAS. PALÆMON.

M.

WHOSE flock, Damœtas? Melibœus's?
D. No, Ægon's. Ægon left it in my care.
M. Unluckiest of flocks! Your master courts
Neæra, wondering if she like me more:
Meanwhile a stranger milks you twice an hour,
Saps the flocks' strength, and robs the suckling lambs.
D. Yet fling more charily such words at *men*.
You—while the goats looked goatish—we know who,
And in what chapel—(but the kind Nymphs laughed)—
M. Then (was it?) when they saw me Micon's shrubs
And young vines hacking with my rascally knife?

D. Or when by this old beech you broke the bow
And shafts of Daphnis: which you cried to see,
You crossgrained lad, first given to the boy;
And harm him somehow you must needs, or die.

M. Where will lords stop, when knaves are come to this?
Did not I see you, scoundrel, in a snare
Take Damon's goat, Wolf barking all the while?
And when I shouted, "Where's he off to? Call,
Tityrus, your flock,"—you skulked behind the sedge.

D. Beaten in singing, should he have withheld
The goat my pipe had by its music earned?
That goat was mine, you mayn't p'r'aps know: and he
Owned it himself; but said he could not pay.

M. He beat by you? You own a decent pipe?
Used you not, dunce, to stand at the crossroads,
Stifling some lean tune in a squeaky straw?

D. Shall we then try in turn what each can do?
I stake yon cow—nay hang not back—she comes
Twice daily to the pail, is suckling twins.
Say what *you*'ll lay.

M. I durst not wager aught
Against you from the flock: for I have at home
A father, I have a tyrant stepmother.

Both count the flock twice daily, one the kids.
But what *you*'ll own far handsomer, I'll stake
(Since you will be so mad) two beechen cups,
The carved work of the great Alcimedon.
O'er them the chiseller's skill has traced a vine
That drapes with ivy pale her wide-flung curls.
Two figures in the centre: Conon one,
And—what's that other's name, who'd take a wand
And shew the nations how the year goes round;
When you should reap, when stoop behind the plough?
Ne'er yet my lips came near them, safe hid up.

D. For *me* two cups the selfsame workman made,
And clasped with lissom briar the handles round.
Orpheus i' the centre, with the woods behind.
Ne'er yet my lips came near them, safe hid up.
—This talk of cups, if on my cow you've fixed
Your eye, is idle.

M. Nay you'll not this day
Escape me. Name your spot, and I'll be there.
Our umpire be—Palæmon; here he comes!
I'll teach you how to challenge folks to sing.

D. Come on, if aught is in you. I'm not loth,
I shrink from no man. Only, neighbour, thou
('Tis no small matter) lay this well to heart.

P. Say on, since now we sit on softest grass;
And now buds every field and every tree,
And woods are green, and passing fair the year.
Damœtas, lead. Menalcas, follow next.
Sing verse for verse: such songs the Muses love.

D. With Jove we open. Jove fills everything,
He walks the earth, he listens when I sing.
M. Me Phœbus loves. I still have offerings meet
For Phœbus; bay, and hyacinth blushing sweet.
D. Me Galatea pelts with fruit, and flies
(Wild girl) to the woods: but first would catch my eyes.
M. Unbid Amyntas comes to me, my flame;
With Delia's self my dogs are not more tame.
D. Gifts have I for my fair: who marked but I
The place where doves had built their nest sky-high?
M. I've sent my poor gift, which the wild wood bore,
Ten golden apples. Soon I'll send ten more.
D. Oft Galatea tells me—what sweet tales!
Waft to the god's ears just a part, ye gales.
M. At heart Amyntas loves me. Yet what then?
He mates with hunters, I with servingmen.
D. Send me thy Phyllis, good Iolas, now.
To-day's my birthday. When I slay my cow

To help my harvest—come, and welcome, thou.

M. Phillis is *my* love. When we part, she'll cry;
And fain would bid Iolas' self good bye.[1]

D. Wolves kill the flocks, and storms the ripened corn;
And winds the tree; and me a maiden's scorn.

M. Rain is the land's delight, weaned kids' the vine;
Big ewes' lithe willow; and one fair face mine.

D. Pollio loves well this homely muse of mine.
For a new votary fat a calf, ye Nine.

M. Pollio *makes* songs. For him a bull demand,
Who butts, whose hoofs already spurn the sand.

D. Who loves thee, Pollio, go where thou art gone.
For him flow honey, thorns sprout cinnamon.

M. Who loathes not Bavius, let him love thy notes,
Mævius:—and yoke the fox, and milk he-goats.

D. Flowers and ground-strawberries while your prize ye make,

[1] Putting the vocative "Iolla" in line 79, as Mr. Kennedy does, into the mouth of Menalcas, not of Phyllis, I would substitute these lines for my original ones:—

Phillis is *my* dear love. She wept when I—
(Yes I, Iollas,)—left her: and "Good-bye",
She said, "Iollas fair; a long Good-bye".

Cold in the grass—fly hence, lads—lurks the snake.

M. Sheep, banks are treacherous: draw not overnigh:
See, now the lordly ram his fleece doth dry.

D. Tityrus, yon she-goats from the river bring.
I in due time will wash them at the spring.

M. Call, lads, your sheep. Once more our hands, should heat
O'ertake the milk, will press in vain the teat.

D. How rich these vetches, yet how lean my ox.
Love kills alike the herdsman and the flocks.

M. *My* lambs—and here love 's not in fault, you'll own—
Witched by some jealous eye, are skin and bone.

D. Say in what land—and great Apollo be
To me—heaven's arch extends just cubits three.

M. Say in what lands with kings' names grav'n are grown
Flowers—and be Phyllis yours and yours alone.

P. Not mine such strife to settle. You have earned
A cow, and you: and whoso else shall e'er
Shrink from love's sweets or prove his bitterness.
Close, lads, the springs. The meads have drunk enough.

ECLOGUE IV.

MUSES of Sicily, a loftier song
Wake we! Some tire of shrubs and myrtles low.
Are woods our theme? Then princely be the woods.

Come are those last days that the Sybil sang:
The ages' mighty march begins anew.
Now comes the virgin, Saturn reigns again:
Now from high heaven descends a wondrous race.
Thou on the newborn babe—who first shall end
That age of iron, bid a golden dawn
Upon the broad world—chaste Lucina, smile:
Now thy Apollo reigns. And, Pollio, thou
Shalt be our Prince, when he that grander age
Opens, and onward roll the mighty moons:
Thou, trampling out what prints our crimes have left,
Shalt free the nations from perpetual fear.
While he to bliss shall waken; with the Blest
See the Brave mingling, and be seen of them,
Ruling that world o'er which his father's arm shed peace.—

On thee, child, everywhere shall earth, untilled,
Show'r, her first baby-offerings, vagrant stems
Of ivy, foxglove, and gay briar, and bean;
Unbid the goats shall come big-uddered home,
Nor monstrous lions scare the herded kine.
Thy cradle shall be full of pretty flowers:
Die must the serpent, treacherous poison-plants
Must die; and Syria's roses spring like weeds.

But, soon as thou canst read of hero-deeds
Such as thy father wrought, and understand
What is true worth: the champaign day by day
Shall grow more yellow with the waving corn;
From the wild bramble purpling then shall hang
The grape; and stubborn oaks drop honeydew.
Yet traces of that guile of elder days
Shall linger; bidding men tempt seas in ships,
Gird towns with walls, cleave furrows in the land.
Then a new Tiphys shall arise, to man
New argosies with heroes: then shall be
New wars; and once more shall be bound for Troy,
A mightier Achilles.

After this,
When thou hast grown and strengthened into man,
The pilot's self shall range the seas no more;
Nor, each land teeming with the wealth of all,

The floating pines exchange their merchandise.
Vines shall not need the pruning-hook, nor earth
The harrow: ploughmen shall unyoke their steers.
Nor then need wool be taught to counterfeit
This hue and that. At will the meadow ram
Shall change to saffron, or the gorgeous tints
Of Tyre, his fair fleece; and the grazing lamb
At will put crimson on.
So grand an age
Did those three Sisters bid their spindles spin;
Three, telling with one voice the changeless will of Fate.

Oh draw—the time is all but present—near
To thy great glory, cherished child of heaven,
Jove's mighty progeny! And lo! the world,
The round and ponderous world, bows down to thee;
The earth, the ocean-tracts, the depths of heaven.
Lo! nature revels in the coming age.
Oh! may the evening of my days last on,
May breath be mine, till I have told thy deeds!
Not Orpheus then, not Linus, shall outsing
Me: though each vaunts his mother or his sire,
Calliopea this, Apollo that.
Let Pan strive with me, Arcady his judge;
Pan, Arcady his judge, shall yield the palm.

Learn, tiny babe, to read a mother's smile:
Already ten long months have wearied her.
Learn, tiny babe. Him, who ne'er knew such smiles,
Nor god nor goddess bids to board or bed.

ECLOGUE V.

MENALCAS. MOPSUS.

Me.

MOPSUS, suppose, now two good men have met—
You at flute-blowing, as at verses I—
We sit down here, where elm and hazel mix.

Mo. Menalcas, meet it is that I obey
Mine elder. Lead, or into shade—that shifts
At the wind's fancy—or (mayhap the best)
Into some cave. See here 's a cave, o'er which
A wild vine flings her flimsy foliage.

Me. On these hills one—Amyntas—vies with you.

Mo. Suppose he thought to outsing Phœbus' self?

Me. Mopsus, begin. If aught you know of flames
That Phyllis kindles; aught of Alcon's worth,
Or Codrus's ill-temper; then begin:

Tityrus meanwhile will watch the grazing kids.

Mo. Ay, I will sing the song which t'other day
On a green beech's bark I cut; and scored
The music, as I wrote. Hear that, and bid
Amyntas vie with me.

Me. As willow lithe
Yields to pale olive; as to crimson beds
Of roses yields the lowly lavender;
So, to my mind, Amyntas yields to you.

Mo. But, lad, no more: we are within the cave.

(*Sings.*) The Nymphs wept Daphnis, slain by ruthless death.
Ye, streams and hazels, were their witnesses:
When, clasping tight her son's unhappy corpse,
"Ruthless," the mother cried, "are gods and stars."
None to the cool brooks led in all those days,
Daphnis, his fed flocks: no four-footed thing
Stooped to the pool, or cropped the meadow-grass.
How lions of the desert mourned thy death,
Forests and mountains wild proclaim aloud.
'Twas Daphnis taught mankind to yoke in cars
The tiger; lead the winegod's revel on,
And round the tough spear twine the bending leaf.

Vines are the green wood's glory, grapes the vine's:
The bull the cattle's, and the rich land's corn
Thou art thy people's. When thou metst thy doom,
Both Pales and Apollo left our fields.
In furrows where we dropped big barley seeds,
Spring now rank darnel and the barren reed:
Not violet soft and shining daffodil,
But thistles rear themselves and sharp-spiked thorn.
Shepherds, strow earth with leaves, and hang the springs
With darkness! Daphnis asks of you such rites:
And raise a tomb, and place this rhyme thereon:
"Famed in the green woods, famed beyond the skies,
A fair flock's fairer lord, here Daphnis lies."

Me. Welcome thy song to me, oh sacred bard,
As, to the weary, sleep upon the grass:
As, in the summer-heat, a bubbling spring
Of sweetest water, that shall slake our thirst.
In song, as on the pipe, thy master's match,
Thou, gifted lad, shalt now our master be.
Yet will I sing in turn, in my poor way,

My song, and raise thy Daphnis to the stars—
Raise Daphnis to the stars. He loved me too.

Mo. Could aught in my eyes such a boon outweigh?
Song-worthy was thy theme: and Stimichon
Told me long since of that same lay of thine.

Me. (*Sings.*) Heaven's unfamiliar floor, and clouds and stars,
Fair Daphnis, wondering, sees beneath his feet.
Therefore gay revelries fill wood and field,
Pan, and the shepherds, and the Dryad maids.
Wolves plot not harm to sheep, nor nets to deer;
Because kind Daphnis makes it holiday.
The unshorn mountains fling their jubilant voice
Up to the stars: the crags and copses shout
Aloud, "A god, Menalcas, lo! a god."
Oh! be thou kind and good unto thine own!
Behold four altars, Daphnis: two for thee,
Two, piled for Phœbus. Thereupon I'll place
Two cups, with new milk foaming, year by year;
Two goblets filled with richest olive-oil:
And, first with much wine making glad the feast—
At the fireside in snowtime, 'neath the trees
In harvest—pour, rare nectar, from the can
The wines of Chios. Lyctian Ægon then

Shall sing me songs, and to Damœtas' pipe
Alphesibœus dance his Satyr-dance.
And this shalt thou lack never: when we pay
The Nymphs our vows, and when we cleanse the fields.
While boars haunt mountain-heights, and fishes streams,
Bees feed on thyme, and grasshoppers on dew,
Thy name, thy needs, thy glory shall abide.
As Bacchus and as Ceres, so shalt thou
Year after year the shepherd's vows receive;
So bind him to the letter of his vow.

Mo. What can I give thee, what, for such a song?
Less sweet to me the coming South-wind's sigh,
The sea-wave breaking on the shore, the noise
Of rivers, rushing through the stony vales.
Me. First I shall offer you this brittle pipe.
This taught me how to sing, "For one fair face:"
This taught me "Whose flock? Melibœus's?"
Mo. Take thou this crook; which oft Antigenes
Asked—and he then was loveable—in vain;
Brass-tipped and even-knotted—beautiful!

ECLOGUE VI.

MY muse first stooped to trifle, like the Greek's,
In numbers; and, unblushing, dwelt in woods.
I sang embattled kings: but Cynthius plucked
My ear, and warned me: "Tityrus, fat should be
A shepherd's wethers, but his lays thin-drawn."
So—for enough and more will strive to tell,
Varus, thy deeds, and pile up grisly wars—
On pipe of straw will I my wood-notes sing:
I sing not all unbid. Yet oh! should one
Smit by great love, should one read this my lay—
Then with thee, Varus, shall our myrtle-groves,
And all these copses, ring. Right dearly loves
Phœbus the page that opens with thy name.

On, sisters!
—Chromis and Mnasylus saw
(Two lads) Silenus in a cave asleep:
As usual, swoln with yesterday's debauch.
Just where it fell his garland lay hard by;
And on worn handle hung his ponderous can.
They—for the old man oft had cheated each
Of promised songs—draw near, and make his wreaths

Fetters to bind him. Ægle makes a third,
(Ægle, the loveliest of the Naiad maids,)
To back their fears: and, as his eyes unclose,
Paints brow and temples red with mulberry.
He, laughing at the trick, cries, "Wherefore weave
These fetters? Lads, unbind me: 'tis enough
But to have seemed to have me in your power.
Ye ask a song; then listen. You I'll pay
With song: for her I've other meed in store."
And forthwith he begins. Then might you see
Move to the music Faun and forest-beast,
And tall oaks bow their heads. Not so delights
Parnassus in Apollo: not so charmed
At Orpheus Rhodope and Ismarus.

For this he sang:—How, drawn from that vast void,
Gathered the germs of earth and air and sea
And liquid flame. How the Beginning sprang
Thence, and the young world waxed into a ball.
Then Earth, grown harder, walled the sea-god off
In seas, and slowly took substantial form:
Till on an awed world dawned the wondrous sun,
And straight from heaven, by clouds unbroken, fell
The showers: as woods first bourgeoned, here and there
A wild beast wandering over hills unknown.

Of Pyrrha casting stones, and Saturn's reign,
The stolen fire, the eagles of the rock,
He sings: and then, beside what spring last seen
The sailors called for Hylas—till the shore
All rang with 'Hylas,' 'Hylas:'—and consoles
(Happy if horned herds never had been born,)
With some fair bullock's love Pasiphae.
Ah! hapless maid! What madness this of thine?
Once a king's daughters made believe to low,
And ranged the leas: but neither stooped to ask
Those base beasts' love: though each had often feared
To find the ploughman's gear about her neck,
And felt on her smooth brow for budding horns.
Ah! hapless maid! Thou roam'st from hill to hill:
He under some dark oak—his snowy side
Cushioned on hyacinths—chews the pale-green grass,
Or woos some favourite from the herd. "Close, Nymphs,
Dictæan Nymphs, oh close the forest-glades!
If a bull's random footprints by some chance
Should greet me! Lured, may be, by greener grass,
Or in the herd's wake following, vagrant kine
May bring him straight into my father's fold!"
—Then sings he of that maid who paused to gaze
At the charmed apples:—and surrounds with moss,

Bitter tree-moss, the daughters of the Sun,
Till up they spring tall alders.—Then he sings
How Gallus, wandering to Parnassus' stream,
A sister led to the Aonian hills,
And, in a mortal's honour, straight uprose
The choir of Phœbus: How that priest of song,
The shepherd Linus,—all his hair with flowers
And bitter parsley shining,—spake to him.
"Take—lo! the Muses give it thee—this pipe,
Once that Ascræan's old: to this would he
Sing till the sturdy mountain-ash came down.
Sing thou on this, whence sprang Æolia's grove,
Till in no wood Apollo glory more."
So on and on he sang:—How Nisus, famed
In story, troubled the Dulichian ships;
And in the deep seas bid her sea-dogs rend
The trembling sailors. Tereus' tale he told,
How he was changed: what banquet Philomel,
What present, decked for him: and how she flew
To the far wilderness; and flying paused—
(Poor thing)—to flutter round her ancient home.

All songs which one day Phœbus sang to charmed
Eurotas—and the laurels learnt them off—
He sang. The thrilled vales fling them to the stars.
Till Hesper bade them house and count their flocks,
And journeyed all unwelcome up the sky.

ECLOGUE VII.

MELIBŒUS, CORYDON, THYRSIS.

M.

DAPHNIS was seated 'neath a murmurous oak,
When Corydon and Thyrsis (so it chanced)
Had driv'n their two flocks—one of sheep, and one
Of teeming goats—together: herdsmen both,
Both in life's spring, and able well to sing,
Or, challenged, to reply. To that same spot
I, guarding my young myrtles from the frost,
Find my goat strayed, the patriarch of the herd:
And straight spy Daphnis. He, espying me
In turn, cries, "Melibœus! hither, quick! lo
Thy goat, and kids, are safe. And if thou hast
An hour to spare, sit down beneath the shade.
Hither unbid will troop across the leas
The kine to drink: green Mincius fringes here
His banks with delicate bullrush, and a noise
Of wild bees rises from the sacred oak."

What could I do? Alcippe I had none,
Nor Phyllis, to shut up my new-weaned lambs:
Then, there was war on foot—a mighty war—
Thyrsis and Corydon!—So in the end
I made my business wait upon their sport.—
So singing verse for verse—that well the Muse
Might mark it—they began their singing-match.
Thus Corydon, thus Thyrsis sang in turn.
(*They sing.*)

C. "Ye Fountain Nymphs, my loves! Grant me to sing
Like Codrus:—next Apollo's rank his lines:—
Or here—if all may scarce do everything—
I'll hang my pipe up on these sacred pines."

T. "Swains! a new minstrel deck with ivy now,
Till Codrus burst with envy! Or, should he
Flatter o'ermuch, twine foxglove o'er my brow,
Lest his knave's-flattery spoil the bard to be."

C. "'To Dian, from young Micon: this boar's head,
And these broad antlers of a veteran buck.'
Full-length in marble—ancle-bound with red
Buskins—I'll rear her, should to-day bring luck."

T. "Ask but this bowl, Priapus, and this cake
Each year: for poor the garden thou dost keep.

Our small means made thee marble: whom
we'll make
Of gold, should lambing multiply our
sheep."

C. "Maid of the seas! more sweet than Hybla's
thyme,
Graceful as ivy, white as is the swan!
When home the fed flocks wend at evening's
prime,
Then come—if aught thou car'st for Cory-
don."

T. "Hark! bitterer than wormwood may I be,
Bristling as broom, as drifted sea-weed cheap,
If this day seem not a long year to me!
Home, home for very shame, my o'er-fed
sheep!"

C. "Ye mossy rills, and lawns more soft than
dreams,
Thinly roofed over by these leaves of green:
From the great heat—now summer's come,
now teems
The jocund vine with buds—my cattle
screen."

T. "Warm hearth, good faggots, and great fires
you'll find
In my home: black with smoke are all its
planks:

We laugh, who 're in it, at the chill north wind,
As wolves at troops of sheep, mad streams at banks."

C. "Here furry chestnuts rise and juniper:
Heaped 'neath each tree the fallen apples lie:
All smiles. But, once let fair Alexis stir
From off these hills—and lo! the streams are dry."

T. "Thirsts in parched lands and dies the blighted grass;
Vines lend no shadow to the mountain-height;
But groves shall bloom again, when comes my lass;
And in glad showers Jove descend in might."

C. "Poplars Alcides likes, and Bacchus vines;
Fair Venus myrtle, and Apollo bay;
But while to hazel-leaves my love inclines,
Nor bays nor myrtles greater are than they."

T. "Fair in woods ash; and pine on garden-grass:
On tall cliffs fir; by pools the poplar-tree.
But if thou come here oft, sweet Lycidas,
Lawn-pine and mountain-ash must yield to thee."

M. All this I've heard before: remember well
How Thyrsis strove in vain against defeat.
From that day forth 'twas 'Corydon' for me.

ECLOGUE VIII.

ALPHESIBŒUS'S and Damon's muse—
Charmed by whose strife the steer forgot to graze;
Whose notes made lynxes motionless, and bade
Rivers turn back and listen—sing we next:
Alphesibœus's and Damon's muse.

Winn'st thou the crags of great Timavus now,
Or skirtest strands where break Illyrian seas?
I know not. But oh when shall that day dawn
When I may tell thy deeds? give earth thy lays,
That match alone the pomp of Sophocles?
With thee began, with thee shall end, my song:
Accept what thou didst ask; and round thy brow
Twine this poor ivy with thy victor bays.

'Twas at the hour when night's cold shadow scarce
Had left the skies; when, blest by herdsmen, hangs
The dewdrop on the grass; that Damon leaned
On his smooth olive-staff, and thus began.

"Wake, morning star! Prevent warm day, and come!

While, duped and humbled, I—because I loved
Nisa with all a husband's love—complain;
And call the gods, (though naught their cognizance
Availed,) at my last hour, a dying man.
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"There forests murmur aye, and pines discourse;
And lovelorn swains, and Pan, who first reclaimed
From idleness the reed, hath audience there,
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"Nisa—is aught impossible in love?—
Is given to Mopsus. Griffins next will mate
With mares: our children see the coward deer
Come with the hound to drink. Go, shape the torch,
Mopsus! fling, bridegroom, nuts! Thou lead'st a wife
Home, and o'er Œta peers the evening star.
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"Oh, mated with a worthy husband! thou
Who scorn'st mankind—abhorr'st this pipe, these goats
Of mine, and shaggy brows, and hanging beard:
Nor think'st that gods can see what mortals do!
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"Within our orchard-walls I saw thee first,
A wee child with her mother—(I was sent
To guide you)—gathering apples wet with dew.
Ten years and one I scarce had numbered then;
Could scarce on tiptoe reach the brittle boughs.
I saw, I fell, I was myself no more.
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"Now know I what love is. On hard rocks born
Tmaros, or Rhodope, or they who dwell
In utmost Africa do father him;
No child of mortal blood or lineage.
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"In her son's blood a mother dipped her hands
At fierce love's bidding. Hard was her heart too—
Which harder? her heart or that knavish boy's?
Knavish the boy, and hard was her heart too.
Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady.

"Now let the wolf first turn and fly the sheep:
Hard oaks bear golden apples: daffodil
Bloom on the alder: and from myrtle-stems
Ooze richest amber. Let owls vie with swans;
And be as Orpheus—Orpheus in the woods,

Arion with the dolphins—every swain,
(Begin, my flute, a song of Arcady)

"And earth become mid ocean. Woods, farewell!
Down from some breezy mountain height to the waves
I'll fling me. Take this last gift ere I die.
Unlearn, my flute, the songs of Arcady."

Thus Damon. How the other made reply
Sing, sisters. Scarce may all do everything.

A. "Fetch water: wreathe yon altar with soft wool:
And burn rich vervain and brave frankincense;
That I may try my lord's clear sense to warp
With dark rites. Naught is lacking save the songs.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Songs can bring down the very moon from heaven.
Circe with songs transformed Ulysses' crew.
Songs shall in sunder burst the cold grass-snake.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Three threads about thee, of three several hues,
I twine; and thrice—(odd numbers please the god)—
Carry thy image round the altar-stones.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Weave, Amaryllis, in three knots three hues.
Just weave and say 'I'm weaving chains of love.'
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"As this clay hardens, melts this wax, at one
And the same flame: so Daphnis 'neath my love.
Strew meal, and light with pitch the crackling bay.
Daphnis burns me; for Daphnis burn these bays.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Be his such longing as the heifer feels,
When, faint with seeking her lost mate through copse
And deepest grove, beside some water-brook
In the green grass she sinks in her despair,
Nor cares to yield possession to the night.
Be his such longing: mine no wish to heal.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Pledges of love, these clothes the traitor once
Bequeathed me. I commit them, Earth, to thee

Here at my threshold. He is bound by these.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"These deadly plants great Mœris gave to me,
In Pontus plucked: in Pontus thousands grow.
By their aid have I seen him skulk in woods
A wolf, unsepulchre the buried dead,
And charm to other fields the standing corn.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"Go, Amaryllis, ashes in thy hand:
Throw them—and look not backwards—o'er thy head
Into a running stream. These next I'll try
On Daphnis; who regards not gods nor songs.
Bring, songs, bring Daphnis from the city home.

"See! While I hesitate, a quivering flame
Hath clutched the wood, self-issuing from the ash.
May this mean good! Something—for Hylas too
Barks at the gate—it must mean. Is it true?
Or are we lovers dupes of our own dreams?
Cease, songs, cease. Daphnis comes from the city home!"

ECLOGUE IX.

LYCIDAS. MŒRIS.

L.

MŒRIS, on foot? and on the road to town?
M. Oh Lycidas!—we live to tell—how one—
(Who dreamed of this?)—a stranger—holds our farm,
And says, "'Tis mine: its ancient lords, begone!"
Beaten, cast down—for Chance is lord of all—
We send him—bootlessly mayhap—these kids.
L. Yet all, I heard, from where we lose yon hills,
With gradual bend down-sloping to the brook,
And those old beeches, broken columns now,
Had your Menalcas rescued by his songs.
M. Thou heardst. Fame said so. But our songs avail,
Mœris, no more 'mid warspears than, they say,
Dodona's doves may, when the eagle stoops.
A boding raven from a rifted oak
Warned me, by this means or by that to nip
This strange strife in the bud: or dead were now
Thy Mœris; dead were great Menalcas too.

L. Could such curse fall on man? Had we so near
Lost thee, Menalcas, and thy pleasantries?
Who then would sing the nymphs? Who strow with flowers
The ground, or train green darkness o'er the springs?
And oh! that song, which I (saying ne'er a word)
Copied one day—(while thou wert off to see
My darling, Amaryllis,)—from thy notes:
"Feed, while I journey but a few short steps,
Tityrus, my goats: and, Tityrus, when they've fed,
Lead them to drink: and cross not by the way
The he-goat's path: his horns are dangerous."

M. But that to Varus, that unfinished one!
"Varus! thy name, if Mantua still be ours—
(Mantua! to poor Cremona all too near,)—
Shall tuneful swans exalt unto the stars."

L. Begin, if in thee's aught. So may not yews
Of Cyrnus lure thy bees: so, clover-fed,
Thy cattle teem with milk. Me too the muse
Hath made a minstrel: I have songs; and me
The swains call 'poet.' But I heed them not.
For scarce yet sing I as the great ones sing,
But, a goose, cackle among piping swans.

M. Indeed, I am busy turning o'er and o'er—
In hopes to recollect it—in my brain
A song, and not a mean one, Lycidas.
"Come, Galatea! sport'st thou in the waves?
Here spring is purpling; thick by river-banks
Bloom the gay flowers; white poplar climbs above
The caves, and young vines plait a roof between.
Come! and let mad seas beat against the shore."

L. What were those lines that once I heard thee sing,
All uncompanioned on a summer night—
I know the music, if I had the words.

M. "Daphnis! why watch those old-world planets rise?
Lo! onward marches sacred Cæsar's star,
The star that made the valleys laugh with corn,
And grapes grow ruddier upon sunny hills.
Sow, Daphnis, pears, whereof thy sons shall eat."
—Time carries all—our memories e'en—away.
Well I remember how my boyish songs
Would oft outlast the livelong summer day.
And now they're all forgot. His very voice
Hath Mœris lost: on Mœris wolves have looked.

—But oft thou'lt hear them from Menalcas yet.

L. Thy pleas but draw my passion out. And lo!
All hushed to listen is the wide sea-floor,
And laid the murmurings of the soughing winds.
And now we're half-way there. I can descry
Bianor's grave. Here, Mœris, where the swains
Are raking off the thick leaves, let us sing.
Or, if we fear lest night meanwhile bring up
The rain clouds, singing let us journey on—
(The way will seem less tedious)—journey on
Singing: and I will ease thee of thy load.

M. Cease, lad. We'll do what lies before us now:
Then sing our best, when comes the Master home.

ECLOGUE X.

Gallus.

O H Arethuse, let this last task be mine!
One song—a song Lycoris' self may read—
My Gallus asks: who'd grudge one song to him?
So, when thou slid'st beneath Sicilian seas,

May ne'er salt Doris mix her stream with thine:
Begin: and sing—while yon blunt muzzles search
The underwood—of Gallus torn by love.
We lack not audience: woods take up the notes.
Where were ye, Naiad Nymphs, in grove or glen,
When Gallus died of unrequited love?
Not heights of Pindus or Parnassus, no
Aonian Aganippe kept ye then.
Him e'en the laurels wept and myrtle-groves.
Stretch'd 'neath the lone cliff, piny Mænalus
And chill Lycæum's stones all wept for him.
The sheep stood round. They think not scorn of us;
And think not scorn, O priest of song, of them.
Sheep fair Adonis fed beside the brooks.
The shepherds came. The lazy herdsmen came.
Came, from the winter acorns dripping-wet,
Menalcas. "Whence," all ask, "this love of thine?"
Apollo came: and, "Art thou mad," he saith,
"Gallus? Thy love, through bristling camps and snows,
Tracks now another's steps." Silvanus came,
Crowned with his woodland glories: to and fro
Rocked the great lilies and the fennel bloom.
Pan came, Arcadia's Pan: (I have seen him, red
With elder-berries and with cinnabar:)

"Is there no end?" quoth he: "Love heeds not this:
Tears sate not cruel Love: nor rills the leas,
Nor the bees clover, nor green boughs the goat."
But he rejoins sad-faced: "Yet sing this song
Upon your hills, Arcadians! none but ye
Can sing. Oh! pleasantly will rest my bones,
If pipe of yours shall one day tell my loves.
Oh! had I been as you are! kept your flocks,
Or gleaned, a vintager, your mellow grapes!
A Phyllis, an Amyntas—whom you will—
Had been my passion—what if he be dark?
Violets are dark and hyacinths are dark.—
And now should we be sitting side by side,
Willows around us and a vine o'erhead,
He carolling, or plucking garlands she.
—Here are cold springs, Lycoris, and soft lawns,
And woods: with thee I'd here decay and die.
Now, for grim war accoutred, all for love,
In the fray's centre I await the foe:
Thou, in a far land—out the very thought!—
Gazest (ah wilful!) upon Alpine snows
And the froz'n Rhine—without me—all alone!
May that frost harm not thee! that jaggèd ice
Cut ne'er thy dainty feet! I'll go, and play
My stores of music—fashioned for the lyre
Of Chalcis—on the pipe of Arcady.

My choice is made. In woods, mid wild beasts' dens,
I'll bear my love, and carve it on the trees:
That with their growth, my loves may grow and grow.
Banded with nymphs I'll roam o'er Mænalus,
Or hunt swift boars; and circle with my dogs,
Unrecking of the cold, Parthenia's glades.
Already over crag and ringing grove
I am borne in fancy: laugh as I let loose
The Cretan arrow from the Parthian bow:—

Pooh! will this heal thy madness? will that god
Learn mercy from the agonies of men?
'Tis past: again nymphs, music, fail to please.
Again I bid the very woods begone.
No deed of mine can change him: tho' I drink
Hebrus in mid December: tho' I plunge
In snows of Thrace, the dripping winter's snows:
Tho', when the parched bark dies on the tall elm,
'Neath Cancer's star I tend the Æthiop's sheep.
Love's lord of all. Let me too yield to Love.

* * * *

—Sung are, oh holy ones, your minstrel's songs:
Who sits here framing pipes with slender reed.
In Gallus' eyes will ye enhance their worth:
Gallus—for whom each hour my passion grows,

As swell green alders when the spring is young.
I rise. The shadows are the singer's bane:
Baneful the shadow of the juniper.
E'en the flocks like not shadow. Go—the star
Of morning breaks—go home, my full-fed sheep.

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